Committee on Agriculture

HB 211 — Farm Products

by Reps. Cobb and Hunchofsky and others (SB 374 by Senator Truenow)

The bill clarifies that the definition of "farm product" in s. 163.3162, F.S., includes plants and plant products, regardless of whether such products are edible or nonedible. The bill also clarifies that the prohibition of a local government from exercising its powers to adopt or enforce any regulation or otherwise limit an activity of a bona fide farm operation applies to the collection, storage, processing, and distribution of a farm product.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 114-0

Committee on Agriculture

CS/HB 593 — Dangerous Dogs

by Intergovernmental Affairs Subcommittee and Rep. Sapp and others (CS/CS/SB 572 by Fiscal Policy Committee; Judiciary Committee; and Senators Collins and Wright)

The bill creates the "Pam Rock Act," which revises the state regulation of dangerous dogs. The bill:

- Requires the confiscation and impoundment of an animal that is being investigated as a dangerous dog and that has killed a person or has bitten and left a mark that scores 5 or higher on the Dunbar bite scale.
- Permits the confiscation and impoundment of an animal that is subject to any other dangerous dog investigations.
- Requires an animal control authority to notify the owner of the final order classifying their dangerous dog by registered mail or certified hand delivery in conformance with the provisions of chapter 48 relating to service of process.
- Requires the owner of a dog classified as dangerous to obtain liability insurance of at least $100,000 and implant a microchip in the dog. The bill creates a third degree felony for the removal of the microchip.
- Requires an animal control authority to humanely euthanize a dangerous dog that has killed a person or has bitten and left a mark that scores 5 or higher on the Dunbar bite scale and has been surrendered to an animal control authority.
- Authorizes an animal control authority to humanely euthanize any other dangerous dog that is surrendered to an animal control authority.
- Changes the current penalty for an owner from a third degree felony to a second degree felony when a dog that has previously been declared dangerous attacks and causes severe injury or death to a human.
- Requires a shelter offering a dog for adoption that has been classified as a dangerous dog to post a sign informing potential adopters of the requirements to keep a dangerous dog.
- Provides that any person who resists or obstructs an animal control authority commits a first degree misdemeanor and provides penalties.
- Provides that an owner who has knowledge of their dog's dangerous propensities commits a first degree misdemeanor if their dog causes severe injury or the death of a human and the owner demonstrated a reckless disregard for such propensities under the circumstances. Current law provides this is a second degree misdemeanor.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 112-0

Committee on Agriculture

CS/CS/CS/SB 700 — Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

by Fiscal Policy Committee; Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government; Agriculture Committee; and Senator Truenow

The bill makes a number of changes to laws related to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (department) and related entities. Specifically, the bill:

- Prohibits local governments from adopting or enforcing any regulation that inhibits the construction of housing for legally verified agricultural workers and provides requirements for such housing.
- Requires any lands acquired by an electric utility which have been classified as agricultural lands at any time in the five years preceding the acquisition of the land by the electric utility to be offered for fee simple acquisition by the department before the land is offered for sale or transferred to a private individual or entity.
- Prohibits the use of drones on agricultural lands by unauthorized individuals and further enhances property owners' protections against harassment from drones.
- Permits the department to adopt rules for protecting public health, safety, and welfare to establish standards for the placement, design, installation, maintenance, and operation of electric vehicle charging stations.
- Prohibits the use of any additive to a public water supply that is not for the explicit purpose of improving water quality.
- Permits the department to provide pest control certificate examinations in person and remotely through a third-party vendor.
- Creates the Honest Service Registry to provide the residents of this state with the information necessary to make an informed choice when deciding which charitable organizations to support. In order to be included on the registry, a charitable organization may not solicit or accept contributions, funding, support, or services from a foreign source of concern and the organization's messaging and content may not be produced or influenced by a foreign source of concern.
- Provides it is unlawful to transport, import, sell, offer for sale, furnish, or give away spores or mycelium capable of producing mushrooms or other material which will contain a controlled substance, including psilocybin or psilocyn, during its lifecycle.
- Grants the department rulemaking authority to enforce the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) standard of identity for meat, poultry, and poultry products, to prohibit the sale of plant-based products mislabeled as meat, poultry, or poultry products in this state.
- Creates an annual petroleum registration program for petroleum owners or operators that own and operate vehicles for transporting petroleum products and permits the department to adopt rules detailing the requirements for such registration.
- Creates the Florida Retail Fuel Transfer Switch Modernization Grant Program.
- Prohibits local governments from restricting any activities of public educational facilities and auxiliary facilities constructed by a board for agricultural education, for Future Farmers of America or 4-H activities, or the storage of any animals or equipment therein.

- Establishes the Florida Aquaculture Foundation as a direct-support organization to conduct programs and activities related to the assistance, promotion, and furtherance of aquaculture and aquaculture producers and to identify and pursue methods to provide statewide resources and materials for these programs.
- Creates the Silviculture Emergency Recovery Program within the department to administer a grant program to assist timber landowners whose timber land was damaged as a result of a declared emergency.
- Changes the Viticulture Advisory Council to the Florida Wine Advisory Council and makes conforming changes related to the new name.
- Prohibits a financial institution from discriminating in the provision of financial services to an agriculture producer based, in whole or in part, upon an ESG factor. The bill also provides that if a financial institution has made any ESG commitment related to agriculture, there is an inference that the institution's denial or restriction of a financial service to an agriculture producer is discriminating against the agriculture producer based upon an ESG factor and provides a remedy for overcoming such inference.
- Permits the department to temporarily suspend a concealed carry license or application if notified by a government entity that the licensee or applicant is arrested or formally charged with a crime that would disqualify such person from having a license, until final disposition of the case.
- Revises the requirements related to the suspension or reinstatement of concealed carry licensees or applicants.
- Reduces the extended review period for a concealed carry applicant's criminal history screening from 90 to 45 days.
- Prohibits the possession of any form of a payment instrument that can be used to authorize a fuel transaction or obtain fuel with the intent to defraud the fuel retailer or the banking institution that issued the payment instrument financial account.
- Revises the definition of "mail depository" to include any other authorized receptacle.
- Revises the acts that constitute mail theft and the penalties for violations.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025, except where otherwise provided.
Vote: Senate 27-9; House 88-27

Committee on Agriculture

CS/HJR 1215 — Ad Valorem Tax Exemption

by State Affairs Committee and Rep. Alvarez, D. and others (CS/SJR 318 by Finance and Tax Committee and Senator Truenow)

The joint resolution proposes an amendment to the Florida Constitution to exempt from ad valorem taxation tangible personal property that is habitually located or typically present on land classified as agricultural; used in the production of agricultural products or for agritourism activities; and owned by the landowner or leaseholder of the agricultural land.

The proposed amendment will be submitted to Florida's electors for approval or rejection at the next general election in November 2026.

If approved by at least 60 percent of the electors, the proposed amendment would first apply to assessments for tax years beginning January 1, 2027.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 110-1

Committee on Appropriations

CS/CS/HB 1133 — Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

by Natural Resources & Disaster Subcommittee; Criminal Justice Subcommittee; and Rep. Shoaf

The bill creates the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Regional Representation Act (Act). The bill creates residency requirements for members of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (Commission) and requires the Governor to ensure compliance with the Act when appointing members to the Commission.

Additionally, the bill specifies that the members of the Commission, the executive director, and law enforcement officers may enter private land in the same manner and subject to the same requirements as a law enforcement officer.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-2; House 116-0

Committee on Appropriations

SB 2500 —Appropriations

by Appropriations Committee

This bill provides for a total budget of $115.1 billion, including:

- $50.58 billion from the General Revenue Fund (GR)
- $2.51 billion from the Education Enhancement Trust Fund
- $1.45 billion from the Public Education Capital Outlay Trust Fund (PECO TF)
- $60.59 billion from other trust funds (TF)
- 111,885.06 full time equivalent positions (FTE)

Debt Reduction and Increased Reserves

- $830 million total authorized to retire outstanding state debt (including SB 1906)
- $12.4 billion Total Reserves (not including trust fund balances)
  - $7.0 billion General Revenue Unallocated
  - $4.9 billion Budget Stabilization Fund ($430 million added)
  - $500 million added to the Emergency Preparedness and Response Fund

Compensation and Benefits

- 2 percent Pay Increase for all State Employees (minimum $1,000 increase)
- Additional Pay Increases for:
  - State Law Enforcement Officers - Total of 10 percent or 15 percent increase with 5 years of service
  - State Firefighters - Total of 10 percent or 15 percent increase with 5 years of service
  - Assistant State Attorneys and Public Defenders
  - Department of Transportation
- State Employee and Retiree Health Insurance Premiums held constant

Education Capital Outlay

- Total: $977.4 million
  - State University System Projects - $427.7 million
  - Florida College System Projects - $113.9 million
  - Charter School Repairs and Maintenance - $248.6 million
  - Small School District Special Facilities - $144.7 million
  - Developmental Research School Repairs and Maintenance - $10 million

Pre-K - 12 Education Appropriations

Total Appropriations: $20.9 billion [$16.1 billion GR; $4.8 billion TF]
Total Funding - Including Local Revenues: $34.6 billion [$20.9 billion state/federal funds; $13.7 billion local funds]

Major Issues

Early Learning Services

Total: $1.6 billion [$605.1 million GR; $1.01 billion TF]
- Partnerships for School Readiness - $34.2 million
- School Readiness Program - $42 million increase
- Voluntary Prekindergarten Program - $431.4 million
  - Decrease of 1,396 fewer students - ($2.6 million)

Public Schools/K12 FEFP

Total Funding: $29.6 billion [$15.9 billion state funds; $13.7 billion local funds]
- FEFP Total Funds increase is $945.2 million or 3.31 percent
- FEFP increase in Total Funds per Student served by a district is $142.74, a 1.59 percent increase (from $8,987.67 to $9,130.41)
- Base Student Allocation (BSA) increase of $41.62 or 0.78 percent
- Required Local Effort (RLE) increase of $529.7 million; RLE millage maintained at prior year level of 3.087 mills

Public Schools/K12 Non-FEFP

Total: $500.8 million [$492.6 million GR; $8.2 million TF]
- Coach Aaron Feis, Chris Hixon, and Coach Scott Beigel Guardian Program - $6.5 million
- School Recognition Program - $135 million
- Mentoring Programs - $13.6 million
- Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources Centers - $8.7 million
- Teacher Professional Development - $13.7 million
- School District Foundation Matching Grants - $7 million
- Florida Safe Schools Canine Program - $3.3 million
- District Threat Management Coordinators - $5 million
- Regional Literacy Teams - $5 million
- Charity for Change - $4.7 million
- SEED School of Miami - $12.2 million
- School and Instructional Enhancement Grants - $47.1 million
- Exceptional Education - $12.4 million
- Florida School for the Deaf and Blind - $80.3 million
- Capital Outlay Funding - $30.4 million

- Jewish Day School Security - $20 million
- School Hardening - $20 million

State Board of Education

Total: $322.5 million [$169.5 million GR; $153 million TF]
- Assessment and Evaluation - $132.2 million
- ACT and SAT Exam Administration - $8 million

Higher Education Appropriations

Total Appropriations: $8.9 billion [$6.7 billion GR; $2.2 billion TF]
Total Funding - Including Local Revenues: $11.7 billion [$8.9 billion state/federal funds; $2.8 billion local funds]

Major Issues

Vocational Rehabilitation

Total: $265.6 million [$60.2 million GR; $205.4 million TF]
- Client Services Increase - $9.0 million [$1.9 million GR; $7.1 million TF]

Blind Services

Total: $79.8 million [$25.5 million GR; $54.4 million TF]
- Client Services Increase - $8 million [$1.4 million GR; $5.1 million TF]

Private Colleges

Total: $193.4 million GR
- Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) - $31.9 million
- Effective Access to Student Education (EASE) - $135.9 million

Student Financial Aid

Total: $1.08 billion [$326.9 million GR; $748.5 million TF]
- Bright Futures - $637.7 million
  - Workload increase - $20.8 million
- Benacquisto Scholarship Program - $38.1 million
  - Workload decrease - ($927,050)
- Children/Spouses of Deceased or Disabled Veterans - $29.1 million
  - Workload increase - $7.6 million
- Florida First Responder Scholarship Program - $10 million
- Open Door Grant Program - $35 million

- Graduation Alternative to Traditional Education (GATE) Scholarship - $7 million

School District Workforce

Total: $771.5 million [$433.2 million GR; $295.6 million TF; $42.7 million tuition/fees]

- Workforce Development - $467.4 million
  - Workload increase - $18 million
- Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant Program for apprenticeships - $20 million
  - Increase for "Grow Your Own Teacher" Apprenticeship Program - $5 million
- PIPELINE Nursing Incentive Funds - $20 million
- Workforce Capitalization Incentive Grants - $40 million
- Graduation Alternative to Traditional Education (GATE) Program - $5 million
- No tuition increase

Florida College System

Total: $2.5 billion [$1.6 billion GR; $254.8 million TF; $704.6 million tuition/fees]

- CAPE Incentive Funds for students who earn Industry Certifications - $20 million
- College System Program Fund - $1.7 billion
  - Workload increase - $60 million
- PIPELINE Nursing Incentive Funds- $40 million
- Student Success Incentive Funds - $30 million
  - 2+2 Student Success Incentive Funds - $17 million
  - Work Florida Incentive Funds - $13 million
- No tuition increase

State University System

Total: $6.8 billion [$4.1 billion GR; $656 million TF; $2.0 billion tuition/fees]

- Lastinger Center for Learning at University of Florida - $50.2 million
  - Workload increase for the New Worlds Tutoring Program - $20 million
- PIPELINE Nursing Incentive Funds- $40 million
- Community School Grant Program - $20.1 million
- Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program for Students with Unique Abilities - $12.5 million
- Florida Center for Autism and Neurodevelopment at University of Florida - $10 million; funding to support the implementation of SB 112
- University of Florida - IFAS - $207 million
  - Workload increase - $3.5 million
- No required tuition increase

Board of Governors

Total: $12.2 million [$10.6 million GR; $1.5 million TF]

Health and Human Services Appropriations

Total Budget: $47.6 billion [$17.7 billion GR; $29.8 billion TF]; 30,991 positions

Major Issues

Agency for Health Care Administration

Total: $36.5 billion [$12.3 billion GR; $24.2 billion TF]; 1,549 positions

- Fully Fund Florida's Medicaid and KidCare Programs - $35.6 billion
- Medicaid Provider Rate Increases - $279.6 million
  - Federally Qualified Health Centers and Rural Health Clinics - $15.4 million
  - Prescribed Pediatric Extended Care Centers - $12.6 million
  - Nursing Home Quality Incentive Program - $246.7 million
  - Targeted Case Management - $5 million
- Individuals with Developmental Disabilities Pilot Program - $44.2 million
- Graduate Medical Education - $38.1 million
- Program for All-inclusive Care of the Elderly (PACE) - $16.8 million
- Audits for Nursing Homes and Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ICF/IID) - $1 million
- Federal Reporting for Adult Behavioral Health and Child Care Set - $0.9 million
- Florida Health Care Connections (FX) - $143.2 million

Agency for Persons with Disabilities

Total: $1.3 billion [$1.2 billion GR; $0.1 billion TF]; 2,709 positions

- Enhanced Funding and Services for Developmental Disability Centers - $13.7 million
- Information Technology - $6 million
- iBudget Waiver Algorithm Study - $1 million
- Fixed Capital Outlay for People with Developmental Disabilities - $1.2 million

Department of Children and Families

Total: $4.8 billion [$2.9 billion GR; $1.9 billion TF]; 12,520 positions

- Support Core Child Welfare Programs - $40.3 million
  - Adoption and Guardianship Assistance Subsidies - $27.4 million
  - Extended Foster Care - $5.3 million
  - Therapeutic Safe Foster Home Pilot - $3 million
  - Foster Care Board Rate Cost of Living Adjustment - $1.6 million
  - Free Online Child Care Provider Coursework and Licensing Exam - $3 million
- Transfer Children's Advocacy Centers from Department of Legal Affairs - $5 million
- Funding for Quality Care and Facility Management in Florida's State Mental Health Treatment Facilities - $92.2 million

- Community-Based Mental Health/Substance Use Prevention Initiatives - $36 million
  - Integrated Behavioral Health Residential Treatment Beds - $10 million
  - Central Receiving Facilities - $6.2 million
  - Criminal Justice Mental Health/Substance Abuse Reinvestment Grant - $6 million
  - Managing Entity Financial System Upgrade and Audits - $11.1 million
  - 988 Behavioral Health and Veterans Crisis Support Lines - $2.7 million
- Opioid Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Efforts - $201.5 million
- Florida System and Child Welfare Information System Modernization - $46.3 million

Department of Elder Affairs

Total: $507.2 million [$268.7 million GR; $238.4 million TF]; 425 positions

- Alzheimer's Disease Initiative - Frail Elders Waiting for Services - $3 million
- Serve Additional Clients in the Community Care for the Elderly (CCE) and Home Care for the Elderly (HCE) Programs - $10.5 million
- Increased Resources for Aging and Disability Resource Centers - $1.0 million
- Information Technology Projects - $3.1 million

Department of Health

Total: $4.1 billion [$1 billion GR; $3.1 billion TF]; 12,276 positions

- Pediatric Cancer Research - Cancer Connect Collaborative Incubator - $30 million
- Statewide Healthcare Screening Marketing Campaign - $1 million
- School Health Services - $8.1 million
- Swimming Lesson Voucher Program - $1 million
- Funding for Intestinal Transplant Support - $15 million
- Increased Funding for the Mary Brogan Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program - $1.8 million
- Increased Funding for Healthy Start Coalitions - $3.4 million
- Early Steps Program Quality Improvement and Enhancement - $8.9 million
- Information Technology - $21.9 million
- Fixed Capital Outlay for County Health Department Facilities - $4 million

Department of Veterans Affairs

Total: $239.9 million [$52.4 million GR; $187.5 million TF]; 1,511 positions

- Enhanced Operational Support and equipment for State Veterans' Nursing Homes - $6.9 million
- Increased Bureau of Field Services staffing - $0.5 million; 5 positions
- Florida is for Veterans Program - $2.1 million
- Veterans Dental Care Grant Program - $1 million
- Information Technology $1.4 million
- Fixed Capital Outlay for State Veterans' Nursing Homes - $20.8 million

Criminal and Civil Justice Appropriations

Total Budget: $7.6 billion [$6.6 billion GR; $1 billion TF]; 45,291.5 positions

Major Issues

- DOC Operational Deficit - $57.2 million
- Criminal Justice Estimating Conference Prison Population Increase - $43.4 million
- DOC Health Services Increase - $23.3 million
- DJJ Increase Residential Commitment Capacity - $15.5 million
- Children in Need of Services/Families in Need of Services (CINS/FINS) - $1.2 million
- Salary Increases for Law Enforcement Officers of Fiscally Constrained Counties - $5 million
- FDLE Law Enforcement Apprenticeship Program - $2.5 million
- Certification of Additional Judgeships - $18.8 million; 97 positions

Department of Corrections

Total: $3.8 billion [$3.7 billion GR; $73.1 million TF]; 23,438 positions

- Operational Deficit - $57.2 million
- Criminal Justice Estimating Conference Prison Population Increase - $43.4 million
- Technology Restoration Plan - $6.8 million
- Food Service Contract - $10.5 million
- Contracted Inmate Health Services - $23.3 million
- Health Services Operations for New Dorms- $11 million
- Certified Officers Public Safety Initiative (Communications) - $2 million

Attorney General/Legal Affairs

Total: $353.8 million [$114.5 million GR; $239.3 million TF]; 1,275.5 positions

- IT Modernization Program - $5.1 million
- IT Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery - $0.4 million

Florida Department of Law Enforcement

Total: $539.0 million [$363.4 million GR; $175.6 million TF]; 2,024 positions

- Fort Myers Regional Operations Center Facility - $5 million
- Salary Increases for Law Enforcement Officers in Fiscally Constrained Counties - $5 million
- Law Enforcement Apprenticeship Program - $2.5 million
- Aviation Operations and Maintenance - $3.6 million
- Office of Wellness Expansion - $0.5 million; 3 positions

- Missing and Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse Technology Upgrade - $1.9 million

Department of Juvenile Justice

Total: $756.5 million [$582.7 million GR; $173.8 million TF]; 3,229.5 positions
- Increase Residential Commitment Bed Capacity - $15.5 million
- Children in Need of Services/Families in Need of Services (CINS/FINS) - $1.2 million
- Crossover Youth Behavioral Health Services Pilot Program - $2.7 million
- Florida Scholars Academy - $2.4 million
- Pace Center for Girls - $2.4 million
- Medical and Food Contract Increases - $4.1 million
- Broward Detention Facility - $2.4 million

Justice Administration

Total: $1.3 billion [$1.1 billion GR; $242.5 million TF]; 10,458.5 positions
- Due Process Costs for Public Defenders - $2.3 million
- GAL - Increase Staff to Represent All Children - $0.5 million; 6 positions
- Increase Title IV-E Trust Fund Authority - $2.6 million; 10 positions
- Guardianship Database - $0.4 million
- Condominium/HOA Criminal Fraud Task Force - $0.6 million

State Court System

Total: $795.2 million [$669.1 million GR; $126.1 million TF]; 4,702 positions
- Certification of Additional Judgeships - $18.8 million; 97 positions
- Due Process Resources - $2.5 million
- Court Reporting Resources - $2.5 million
- Appellate Technology Resources - $1.2 million
- 5th District Court of Appeal Security Upgrades - $2.3 million
- 6th District Court of Appeal Courthouse - $2.0 million

Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development Appropriations

Total Budget: $17.9 billion [$652 million GR; $17.2 billion TF]; 12,647 positions

Major Issues

Department of Commerce

Total: $1.5 billion [$282.5 million GR; $1.3 billion TF]; 1,488 positions
- Hometown Heroes Housing Program - $50 million GR
- State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) Program - $163.8 million TF

- Affordable Housing (SAIL) Program - $71.2 million TF
- Economic Development Toolkit - $3.4 million GR & $19.1 million TF
- Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery Grant Funding (CDBG-DR) - $150 million TF
- Law Enforcement Recruitment Bonus Program - $20 million GR
- Florida Job Growth Grant Funding - $50 million GR

Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles

Total: $623.9 million TF; 4,097 positions

- Additional Equipment for the Florida Highway Patrol - $4.3 million TF
- Security and Fraud Prevention - $3.5 million TF
- Replace Pursuit Vehicles - $3.3 million TF
- Increase OPS to Address Driver License Services Backlog - $3.1 million TF
- Increased Funding for Additional License Plate Purchases - $2.4 million TF
- Increase Funding for Operation of Motor Vehicles - $6.2 million TF

Department of Military Affairs

Total: $130.7 million [$85.4 million GR; $45.2 million TF]; 480 positions

- Additional Budget Authority to Support Federal Cooperative Agreements - $1.5 million TF
- Florida State Guard:
  - Training and Recruitment Resources - $5.8 million GR
  - Operating Expenses - $25.7 million GR
- Revitalization of Armories (REVAMP) - $3 million GR
- Camp Blanding - Level II FCO - $16.5 million GR

Department of State

Total: $144.2 million [$120.9 million GR; $23.3 million TF]; 450 positions

- Cultural and Museum Program Support Grants - $20.8 million GR
- Department Wide Litigation Expenses - $2 million GR
- Florida African-American Heritage Preservation Network - $800,000 GR
- Division of Corporations Call Center Services - $2.7 million GR
- Reimbursements to Counties for Special Elections - $2.5 million GR
- Local Initiatives - $26.8 million GR

Department of Transportation

Total: $15.1 billion [$110.4 million GR; $15.0 billion TF]; 5,907 positions

- Transportation Work Program - $13.5 billion TF
- Information Technology

  - Florida Planning, Accounting, and Ledger Management (PALM) Readiness - $11.7 million TF
  - Data Infrastructure Modernization - $5.1 million TF
- Increase Operation Costs Department-wide - $10.0 million TF
- Fixed Capital Outlay Projects - $28.5 million TF
- Equipment Replacement - $9.2 million TF

Division of Emergency Management (Executive Office of the Governor)

Total: $343.5 million [$52.7 million GR; $290.8 million TF]; 225 positions
- Open Federally Declared Disasters
  - State Operations - $203.7 million TF
- Information Technology
  - Statewide Emergency Alert and Notification System - $3.2 million GR
  - Cybersecurity Grant Program - $12 million TF
  - Technology Infrastructure at Emergency Operations Center - $5 million GR

Agriculture, Environment, and General Government Appropriations

Total Budget: $9.7 billion [$2.3 billion GR; $1.3 billion LATF; $6.1 billion Other TF]; 20,428 positions

Major Issues

Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Total: $3.4 billion [$743.6 million GR; 2.7 billion TF]; 3,820 positions
- Rural and Family Lands Protection Program - $250 million
- Agriculture and Aquaculture Natural Disaster Loan Program - $40 million
- Feeding Programs - $53.7 million
- Forestry - $41.4 million
- Statewide Water Restoration Agricultural Projects - $20.0 million
- Citrus Protection and Research - $124.5 million
  - Citrus Health Response Program - $6 million
  - Citrus Packing Equipment - $10 million
  - Citrus Research and Field Trials - $104.5 million
- Agriculture Education and Promotion Facilities - $15.7 million
- Conner Complex Construction - $172 million
- State Farmers Markets - $20.0 million
- Florida State Fair - $13.7 million GR

Department of Citrus

Total: $35.2 million [$13.4 million GR; $21.8 million TF]; 28 positions

- Citrus Marketing - $5 million
- Citrus Recovery Program - $2 million

Department of Environmental Protection

Total: $2.6 billion [$666.7 million GR; $1.9 billion TF]; 3,126 positions

- Everglades Restoration - $691.5 million
- Water Quality Improvements - $675.2 million
  - Indian River Lagoon WQI - $25 million
  - Biscayne Bay Water Quality Improvements - $20 million
  - Water Projects - $436 million
  - C-51 Reservoir - $65 million
  - Non-Point Source Planning Grants - $13.6 million
  - Alternative Water Supply - $50 million
  - Water Quality Improvements - Blue Green Algae Task Force - $10.8 million
  - Innovative Technology Grants for Harmful Algal Blooms - $10 million
  - Harmful Algal Bloom Management - $5 million
  - Springs Restoration - $50 million
- Flood and Sea-Level Rise and Planning Grant Programs - $170 million
- Land Acquisition - $84 million
  - Division of State Lands - $18 million
  - Federal Grants - $15 million
  - Local Acquisitions - $51 million
- Florida Keys Area of Critical State Concern - $20 million
- Apalachicola Bay Area of Critical State Concern - $5 million
- Coral Reef Restoration - $17.5 million
- Petroleum Tanks Cleanup Program - $195 million
- Hazardous Waste and Dry Clean Site Cleanup - $14 million
- Beach Management Funding Assistance - $53 million
- Drinking Water and Wastewater Revolving Loan Programs - $2.4 billion
- Small County Wastewater Treatment Grants - $8 million
- State and Local Parks - $28.2 million

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Total: $569 million [$165.6 million GR; $403.5 million TF]; 2,159 positions

- Motor Vehicle/Vessel Replacement - $3.6 million
- Nuisance Wildlife Control - $6.8 million
- Land Management - $19 million
- Derelict Vessel Removal - $4.5 million
- Florida Boating Improvement Program - $3.0 million
- Artificial Reef Program - $0.6 million

Department of Business and Professional Regulation

Total: $299.5 million [$8.9 million GR; $290.6 million TF]; 1,649 positions
- Resources for Implementation of HB 913 - $1 million

Florida Gaming Control Commission

Total: $31.9 million TF; 197 positions

Department of Financial Services

Total: $731.7 million [$177.3 million GR; $554.4 million TF]; 2,639.50 positions
- My Safe Florida Home Program - $280.0 million
- PALM (FLAIR Replacement) - $43.2 million
- PALM Readiness - $9.8 million and 15.0 positions
- Information Technology Upgrades, Systems and Contract Increases - $10.9 million
- Law Enforcement, Fire Marshal and Disaster Response Training, Vehicles and Technology Upgrades and Equipment - $8.1 million
- Local Government Fire and Firefighter Services - $66.3 million
- University of Miami - Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center/Firefighter Cancer Initiative - $3.5 million
- Other Local Government Grants - $4.6 million

Department of the Lottery

Total: $234.3 million TF; 437 positions
- Increase Advertising Agency Fees - $.5 million
- Increase to Gaming System Contract - $.8 million

Department of Management Services

Total Budget: $832.6 million [$156.3 million GR; $676.3 million TF]; 1,014 positions
- Florida Facilities Pool (FFP) Fixed Capital Outlay - $104.5 million
- Statewide Law Enforcement Radio System (SLERS) Issues - $3.5 million
- Florida PALM Readiness - $8.6 million
- E-Rate Telecommunications - $1.3 million
- Emergency 911 Public Safety Answering Points Upgrade - $1.8 million

Division of Administrative Hearings

Total Budget: $39.6 million TF; 235 positions

Public Service Commission

Total: $31.6 million TF; 268 positions

Department of Revenue

Total: $857.7 million [$333.3 million GR; $524.4 million TF]; 4,856.25 positions
- Fiscally Constrained Counties - $76.5 million
- IT Issues - $43.6 million

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025, except as otherwise provided, or, if these provisions fail to become a law until after that date, they shall take effect upon becoming a law and shall operate retroactively to July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 34-0; House 103-2

Committee on Appropriations

SB 2502 — Implementing the 2025-2026 General Appropriations Act

by Appropriations Committee

This bill provides the following substantive modifications for the 2025-2026 fiscal year:

Section 1 provides legislative intent that the implementing and administering provisions of this act apply to the General Appropriations Act (GAA) for Fiscal Year 2025-2026.

Section 2 incorporates the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) work papers by reference for the purpose of displaying the calculations used by the Legislature.

Section 3 incorporates the School Readiness Program Reimbursement work papers by reference for the purpose of displaying the rates used in making appropriations for the school readiness program allocation.

Section 4 requires universities to designate a percentage of their annual state operating budget carry forward (as authorized by s. 1011.45, F.S.) to be applied towards the completion of previously funded public education capital outlay (PECO) projects pursuant to s. 1001.706(12), F.S., or deferred maintenance.

Section 5 provides that the amendments to s. 1011.45, F.S., expire on July 1, 2026, and the text of that provision reverts back to that in existence on June 30, 2025.

Section 6 amends s. 1009.26, F.S., to modify the fee waivers for students enrolled in a Program of Strategic Emphasis or a state-approved teacher preparation program to specify that a university shall waive 100 percent of a student's out-of-pocket expenses for tuition and fees after all aid is applied.

Section 7 provides that the amendments to s. 1009.26(18), F.S., expire on July 1, 2026, and the text of that provision reverts back to that in existence on June 30, 2025.

Section 8 amends s. 1004.89, F.S., to remove that requirement that Miami-Dade College partners with the Adam Smith Center for Economic Freedom and approve a direct-support organization for the Institute for Freedom in the Americas.

Section 9 provides that the amendments to s. s. 1004.89, F.S., expire on July 1, 2026, and the text of that provision reverts back to that in existence on June 30, 2025.

Section 10 allows a university board of trustees that is beginning an approved capital outlay project with a healthcare provider to accept the healthcare provider's procurement methods and construction contracts and reimburse the healthcare provider for its initial expenses using the proceeds from a bond issuance approved by the Board of Governors.

Section 11 notwithstands ss. 1011.45 and 1012.975, F.S., to allow the Board of Trustees of Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University to use carry forward or non-state funds for presidential remuneration.

Section 12 authorizes the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) to submit a budget amendment to realign funding within the Medicaid program appropriation categories to address any projected surpluses and deficits for Fiscal Year 2025-2026.

Section 13 authorizes the AHCA to submit a budget amendment to realign funding within the Florida KidCare program appropriation categories, or to increase budget authority in the Children's Medical Services Network category, to address projected surpluses and deficits within the program or to maximize the use of state trust funds. A single budget amendment must be submitted in the last quarter of Fiscal Year 2025-2026.

Section 14 amends s. 381.986(17), F.S., to provide that the Department of Health (DOH) is not required to prepare a statement of estimated regulatory costs when adopting rules relating to medical marijuana testing laboratories, and any such rules adopted prior to July 1, 2026, are exempt from the legislative ratification provision of s. 120.541(3), F.S. Medical marijuana treatment centers are authorized to use a laboratory that has not been certified by the department until rules relating to medical marijuana testing laboratories are adopted by the department, but no later than July 1, 2026.

Section 15 amends s. 14(1), ch. 2017-232, L.O.F., to extend emergency rulemaking authority for the DOH and applicable boards to implement s. 381.986, F.S.; exempts emergency rules from certain findings and procedures under ch. 120, F.S.; requires initiation of nonemergency rulemaking by September 1, 2025; prohibits further use of emergency rulemaking under this section after December 31, 2025.

Section 16 provides that the amendments to s. 14(1) of ch. 2017-232, L.O.F., expire on January 1, 2026, and the text of that provision reverts back to that in existence on June 30, 2019.

Section 17 authorizes the AHCA to submit budget amendments to implement the federally approved Directed Payment Program for hospitals statewide, the Indirect Medical Education Program, and a nursing workforce expansion and education program.

Section 18 authorizes the AHCA to submit budget amendments to implement the federally approved Directed Payment Program and fee-for-service supplemental payments for cancer hospitals that meet certain federal criteria.

Section 19 authorizes the AHCA to submit a budget amendment, including specified information, to implement the Low Income Pool Program.

Section 20 authorizes the AHCA to submit a budget amendment to implement fee-for-service supplemental payments and manage a supplemental payment plan to support physicians and

subordinate licensed health care practitioners employed by or under contract with a Florida medical or dental school, or a public hospital.

Section 21 authorizes the AHCA to submit a budget amendment to implement a certified expenditure program for emergency medical transportation services.

Section 22 authorizes the AHCA to submit a budget amendment requesting spending authority to implement the Disproportionate Share Hospital Program.

Section 23 authorizes the AHCA to submit a budget amendment requesting spending authority to implement a Supplemental Payment Plan for specialty children's hospitals.

Section 24 authorizes the AHCA to submit budget amendments to request additional budget authority to implement the Florida School-Based Services Program.

Section 25 amends s. 409.908, F.S., to increase the nursing home prospective payment methodology for the Medicaid Quality Incentive Program Payment Pool and revise the quality score threshold for facilities to qualify for incentive payments.

Section 26 provides that the amendments to s. 409.908, F.S., expire on July 1, 2026, and the text of those provisions reverts back to that in existence on June 30, 2025.

Section 27 authorizes the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to submit a budget amendment to realign funding between guardianship assistance payments, foster care Level 1 board payments, and relative caregiver assistance payments for current caseload.

Section 28 authorizes the DCF, the DOH, and the AHCA to submit budget amendments to increase budget authority as necessary to meet caseload requirements for Refugee Programs administered by the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement. This section requires the DCF to submit quarterly reports on caseload and expenditures.

Section 29 authorizes the DCF to submit budget amendments to increase funding for the following federal grants: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer, American Rescue Plan (ARP) Grant, State Opioid Response Grant, Substance Use Prevention and Treatment Block Grant, Mental Health Block Grant, Chafee Grant for independent living services, Education and Traditional Voucher Grant, Title IV-B Subparts 1 and 2 Grant, Elder Justice Act, STOP (Services, Training, Officers, and Prosecutors) Violence Against Women Grant, and Rapid Unsheltered Survivor Housing Grant.

Section 30 authorizes the DCF to submit budget amendments pursuant to ch. 216, F.S., to transfer funds and increase budget authority as needed to support the Automated Community Connection to Economic Self-Sufficiency (ACCESS) system.

Section 31 amends s. 393.066, F.S., to establish a monthly reimbursement rate for Life Skills Development Levels 3 and 4 iBudget services for recipients attending at least 16 days per month, with existing hourly rates retained for fewer days. This section requires fiscal monitoring and quarterly reports. It also revises provider data reporting requirements, allowing providers to use their own systems if data is electronically transmitted in agency-approved formats, and updates billing, technical, and staff training requirements.

Section 32 provides that the amendments to s. 393.066, F.S., expire on July 1, 2026, and the text of those provisions reverts back to that in existence on June 30, 2025.

Section 33 provides that funding appropriated to the Managing Entities from the Opioid Settlement Trust Fund in Fiscal Year 2025-2026 shall be exempt from the eight-percent carry forward threshold pursuant to s. 394.9082(9)(a), F.S.

Section 34 amends s. 409.9913, F.S., to require the DCF to develop and report on an alternative tiered funding methodology to allocate to lead agencies and submit a detailed report to the Governor and Legislature by December 1, 2025.

Section 35 authorizes the DOH to submit a budget amendment to increase budget authority for the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and the Child Care Food Program if additional federal revenues become available.

Section 36 authorizes the DOH to submit a budget amendment to increase budget authority for the HIV/AIDS Prevention and Treatment Program if additional federal revenues become available.

Section 37 authorizes the DOH to submit a budget amendment to increase budget authority for COVID-19 grants if additional federal revenues become available.

Section 38 requires the AHCA to replace the current Florida Medicaid Management Information System and provides requirements of the system. This section also establishes the executive steering committee (ESC) membership, duties and the process for ESC meetings and decisions. Provides requirements for deliverable-based fixed price contracts.

Section 39 requires the AHCA, in consultation with the DOH, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD), the DCF, and the Department of Corrections (DOC), to competitively procure a contract with a vendor to negotiate prices for prescription drugs, including insulin and epinephrine, for all participating agencies. The contract must require that the vendor be compensated on a contingency basis paid from a portion of the savings achieved through the negotiation and purchase of prescription drugs.

Section 40 authorizes the APD to submit budget amendments to transfer funding from salaries and benefits to contractual services in order to support additional staff augmentation at the Developmental Disability Centers.

Section 41 authorizes the APD to submit budget amendments to request funds from the Lump Sum Home and Community Based Services Waiver category necessary to address any deficits or funding shortfalls within its existing appropriation.

Section 42 authorizes the AHCA to submit budget amendments as needed, notwithstanding ss. 216.181 and 216.292, F.S., to increase budget authority to implement the home and community-based services Medicaid waiver program of the APD.

Section 43 provides that the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), subject to Legislative Budget Commission (LBC) approval, may request authority to establish positions in excess of the number authorized by the Legislature, increase appropriations from the Operations and Maintenance Trust Fund, or provide necessary salary rate sufficient to provide for essential staff for veterans' nursing homes, if the DVA projects that additional direct care staff are needed to meet its staffing ratios.

Section 44 amends s. 409.915(1), F.S., to provide that the term "state Medicaid expenditures" does not include funds specially assessed by any local governmental entity and used as the nonfederal share for the hospital Directed Payment Program after July 1, 2021.

Section 45 authorizes the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) to submit budget amendments pursuant to ch. 216, F.S., subject to federal approval, requesting additional spending authority to support the development and construction of a new State Veterans Nursing Home and Adult Day Health Care Center in Collier County.

Section 46 authorizes the Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA) to submit a budget amendment to increase budget authority for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Adult Care Food Program, if additional federal revenues will be expended in the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

Section 47 amends s. 766.314, F.S., to authorize the Neurological Injury Compensation Association to accept new claims during Fiscal Year 2025-2026, in excess of the total of all current estimates for the fiscal year.

Section 48 amends s. 216.262(4), F.S., to allow the Executive Office of the Governor (EOG) to request additional positions and appropriations from unallocated general revenue during Fiscal Year 2025-2026 for the DOC if the actual inmate population of the DOC exceeds certain Criminal Justice Estimating Conference forecasts. The additional positions and appropriations may be used for essential staff, fixed capital improvements, and other resources to provide classification, security, food services, health services, and other variable expenses within the institutions, to accommodate the estimated increase in the inmate population, and are subject to LBC review and approval.

Section 49 amends s. 215.18(2), F.S., to provide the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court with the authority to request a trust fund loan.

Section 50 requires the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) to review county juvenile detention payments to ensure that counties are fulfilling their financial responsibilities. If the DJJ determines that a county has not met its obligations, the Department of Revenue (DOR) must deduct the amount owed to the DJJ from shared revenue funds provided to the county under s. 218.23, F.S.

Section 51 reenacts s. 27.40(1), (2)(a), (3)(a), and (5)-(7), F.S., to continue to require written certification of conflict by the public defender or regional conflict counsel before a court may appoint private conflict counsel.

Section 52 provides that the amendments to s. 27.40(1)(2)(a)(3)(a)(5)-(7), F.S., expire July 1, 2026, and the text of that section reverts to that in existence on June 30, 2019.

Section 53 amends s. 27.5304(6) and (13), F.S., to create a rebuttable presumption of correctness for objections to billings made by the Justice Administrative Commission (JAC) and provides requirements for payments to private counsel. This section reenacts s. 27.5304(1)(3)(7)(11)(12)(a)-(e), F.S., to increase caps for compensation of court appointed counsel in criminal cases.

Section 54 provides that the amendments to s. 27.5304(1), (3), (6), (7), (11), and (12)(a)-(e), F.S., expire July 1, 2026, and the text of that section reverts to that in existence on June 30, 2019.

Section 55 amends s. 934.50(7)(f), F.S., notwithstanding subsection (7), to create the drone program within the Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) and authorize the FDLE to provide any drones turned in to the Florida Center for Cybersecurity for analysis.

Section 56 amends s. 908.1033, F.S., to clarify that the eligibility for bonus payments provided to local law enforcement from the Local Law Enforcement Immigration Grant Program includes county correctional officers.

Section 57 requires the Department of Management Services (DMS) and agencies to utilize a tenant broker to renegotiate private lease agreements, in excess of 2,000 square feet, expiring between July 1, 2026, and June 30, 2028, and submit a report by November 1, 2025.

Section 58 provides that, notwithstanding s. 216.292(2)(a), F.S., which authorizes transfers of up to five percent of approved budget between categories, agencies may not transfer funds from a data processing category to a category other than another data processing category or a cloud computing category for information technology resources hosted outside of an agency.

Section 59 authorizes the Executive Office of the Governor (EOG) to transfer funds in the appropriation category "Special Categories-Risk Management Insurance" between departments in order to align the budget authority granted with the premiums paid by each department for risk management insurance.

Section 60 authorizes the EOG to transfer funds in the appropriation category "Special Categories - Transfer to DMS - Human Resources Services Purchased per Statewide Contract" of the GAA between departments, in order to align the budget authority granted with the assessments that must be paid by each agency to the DMS for human resources management services.

Section 61 authorizes the DMS to use five percent of facility disposition funds from the Architects Incidental Trust Fund to offset relocation expenses associated with disposition of state office buildings.

Section 62 to ensure continued operations, and notwithstanding the provisions of ch. 287, part I, F.S., all agencies defined in s. 287.012(1), F.S., subject to appropriation, may purchase the current productivity and cybersecurity tools and services from a qualified provider under the state master agreement. The DMS shall ensure that the state master agreement for the current tools and services remains active and available for agencies to use when negotiating enterprise agreements.

Section 63 defines the components of the Florida Accounting Information Resource subsystem (FLAIR) and Cash Management System (CMS) included in the Department of Financial Services Planning Accounting and Ledger Management (PALM) system. This section also provides the executive steering committee membership and the procedures for executive steering committee meetings and decisions.

Section 64 reenacts s. 282.709(3), F.S., to carry forward the DMS's authority to execute a 15-year contract with the Statewide Law Enforcement Radio System (SLERS) operator.

Section 65 provides that the amendment to s. 282.709(3), F.S., expires July 1, 2026, and the text of that section reverts to that in existence on June 1, 2021.

Section 66 authorizes state agencies and other eligible users of the SLERS network to utilize the DMS state SLERS contract for the purchase of equipment and services.

Section 67 authorizes a reduction of the MyFloridaMarketPlace (MFMP) transaction fee from one percent to .70 percent for Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

Section 68 amends s. 24.105(9)(i), F.S., to require the commission for lottery ticket sales to be set at 6 percent of the purchase price of each ticket sold or issued as a prize by a retailer.

Section 69 provides that the text of s. 24.105(9)(i), F.S., expires July 1, 2026, and the text of that section reverts to that in existence on June 30, 2023.

Section 70 amends s. 627.351(6)(ll), F.S., to authorize Citizen's Property Insurance Corporation to adopt policy forms authorizing disputes regarding claim determinations to come before the Division of Administrative Hearings (DOAH).

Section 71 authorizes the Department of Financial Services (DFS) to provide for the deferral of an employee's compensation on either a pre-tax basis or an after-tax Roth contribution basis under a qualified program pursuant to s. 402a of the Internal Revenue Code.

Section 72 amends s. 110.116, F.S., to require the DMS to contract with an independent software quality assurance testing provider to produce documentation for the People First system.

Section 73 amends s. 215.5586, F.S., to revise the eligibility requirements for the My Safe Florida Home Program. This section also provides that hurricane mitigation inspections must have occurred within the previous 24 months from the date of application.

Section 74 notwithstands s. 216.031, F.S., to prevent funds for local government fire equipment and services funded through the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 General Appropriations Act from reverting at the end of the fiscal year.

Section 75 authorizes the EOG to submit a budget amendment to transfer funds appropriated in the "Northwest Regional Data Center" category between departments in order to align the budget authority granted based on the estimated costs for data processing services for the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

Section 76 provides that auxiliary assessments charged to state agencies related to contract management services provided to Northwest Regional Data Center shall not exceed three percent.

Section 77 reenacts s. 284.51, F.S., directing the Division of Risk Management at the DFS to select a provider to establish a statewide pilot program to make electroencephalogram combined transcranial magnetic stimulation (eTMS) available for veterans, first responders, and immediate family members thereof with certain medical conditions. The section also amends s. 284.51, F.S., to revise, for the purposes of this section, the definition of a first responder.

Section 78 authorizes the DFS to renew the existing eTMS contract for a period of two years and directs the DFS to amend the existing contract language to clarify that any funds paid by the Department pursuant to the contract do not constitute state financial assistance as provided in s. 215.97, F.S.

Section 79 notwithstands the deadline in ch. 2024-231, L.O.F., for child support guideline review and modifies the report date to December 1, 2025.

Section 80 authorizes the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS) to submit a budget amendment to increase budget authority to support the National School Lunch Program.

Section 81 amends s. 215.18(3), F.S., to authorize loans to land acquisition trust funds within several state agencies.

Section 82 provides that, in order to implement specific appropriations from the land acquisition trust funds within the DACS, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC), and the Department of State (DOS), the DEP will transfer a proportionate share of revenues in the Land Acquisition Trust Fund within the DEP on a monthly basis, after subtracting required debt service payments, to each agency and retain a proportionate share within the Land Acquisition Trust Fund within the DEP. Total distributions to a land acquisition trust fund within the other agencies may not exceed the total appropriations for the fiscal year. The section further provides that the DEP may advance funds from the beginning unobligated fund balance in the Land Acquisition Trust Fund (LATF) to the LATF within the FWC for cash flow purposes.

Section 83 amends s. 259.105(3), F.S., to notwithstand the Florida Forever statutory distribution and authorize the use of funds from the trust fund as provided in the GAA.

Section 84 extends the current requirement that the DEP adopt by rule statewide cleanup target levels for PFAS in drinking water, groundwater, and soil if the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has not finalized standards by January 1, 2026.

Section 85 provides that the amendment to s. 376.91(2), F.S., expires July 1, 2026, and the text of that section reverts to that in existence on June 30, 2025.

Section 86 amends s. 376.3071(13), F.S., to notwithstand the requirements of the program relating to deductibles, copayments, and monetary caps and provide that all costs relating to the program be absorbed by the Inland Protection Trust Fund.

Section 87 amends s. 376.3072, F.S., to notwithstand the requirements of the program relating to deductibles, copayments, and monetary caps and provide that all costs relating to the program can be absorbed by the Inland Protection Trust Fund.

Section 88 amends s. 376.3071(15)(g), F.S., to revise the requirements for the usage of the trust fund for ethanol or biodiesel damage.

Section 89 provides that the amendment to s. 376.3071(15)(g), F.S., expires July 1, 2026, and the text of that section reverts to that in existence on July 1, 2020.

Section 90 provides that, notwithstanding ch. 287, F.S., the Department of Citrus is authorized to enter into agreements to expedite the increased production of citrus trees that show tolerance or resistance to citrus greening.

Section 91 amends s. 380.5105, F.S., to clarify that grants under the Stan Mayfield Working Waterfront program may be awarded for capital expenditure projects to support the commercial and marine aquaculture industries.

Section 92 provides that the amendment to s. 380.5105, F.S., expires July 1, 2026, and the text of that section reverts to that in existence on June 30, 2024.

Section 93 amends s. 10, ch. 2022-272, L.O.F., to carry forward the Hurricane Restoration Reimbursement Grant Program.

Section 94 authorizes the FWC to use funds appropriated for derelict vessel removal for grants to local governments to remove themselves or pay private contractors to, remove, store, destroy, and dispose of derelict vessels or vessels declared a public nuisance.

Section 95 notwithstands ss. 403.0673 and 403.890, F.S., to authorize funds appropriated the Water Protection and Sustainability Program Trust Fund to be used for projects as provided in the GAA.

Section 96 amends s. 375.041(3)(b), F.S., to provide that the distribution from the Land Acquisition Trust Fund is according to the Fiscal Year 2025-22026 General Appropriations Act.

Section 97 amends s. 288.80125(3), F.S., to allow funds to be used for the Rebuild Florida Revolving Loan Fund Program to provide assistance to businesses impacted by Hurricane Michael as provided in the GAA.

Section 98 amends s. 339.135(7)(h), F.S., to authorize the chair and vice chair of the LBC to approve, pursuant to s. 216.177, F.S., a Department of Transportation (DOT) work program amendment that adds a new project, or a phase of a new project, in excess of $3 million, if the LBC does not meet or consider, within 30 days of submittal, the amendment by the DOT.

Section 99 authorizes flexibility for the DOT to rebalance funds within the Work Program based on lower projected revenues. This section authorizes the DOT to advance or defer up to $200 million in programmed projects in the Adopted Work Program, in order to realign resources and ensure a balanced financial plan.

Section 100 amends s. 288.0655(6), F.S., to authorize rural Florida Panhandle counties to participate in the Rural Infrastructure Fund grant program as authorized in the GAA.

Section 101 authorizes the Division of Emergency Management (DEM) to submit budget amendments to increase budget authority for projected expenditures due to federal reimbursements from federally declared disasters.

Section 102 exempts the DEM from s. 282.201, F.S., relating to the use of the state data center.

Section 103 amends s. 251.001, F.S., to specify the transfer of State Guard aircraft to the FDLE for training and operational use, except in specific times of natural emergencies.

Section 104 amends s. 443.1113, F.S., to clarify that enhancements to the Reemployment Assistance Claims and Benefits Information System are subject to appropriation and to revise submission timelines and annual reporting requirements for future modernization efforts.

Section 105 provides that the amendments to s. 443.1113, F.S., expire on July 1, 2026, and the text of that provision reverts back to that in existence on June 30, 2025.

Section 106 amends s. 445.08, F.S., to modify the July 1, 2025 expiration date of the Law Enforcement Recruitment Program. This section provides a definition for the term "break in service" and establishes time periods related to employment requirements.

Section 107 amends s. 420.5096, F.S., to limit eligibility for the Florida Hometown Hero Program, for the 2025-2026 fiscal year, to borrowers employed in certain professions or who are servicemembers or veterans.

Section 108 requires the DMS to assess an administrative health assessment to each state agency equal to the employer's cost of individual employee health care coverage for each vacant position.

Section 109 provides that, notwithstanding s. 11.13, F.S., salaries of legislators must be maintained at the same level as July 1, 2010.

Section 110 reenacts s. 215.32(2)(b), F.S., in order to implement the transfer of moneys to the General Revenue Fund from trust funds in the GAA.

Section 111 provides that the amendment to s. 215.32(2)(b), F.S., expires July 1, 2026, and the text of that section reverts to that in existence on June 30, 2011.

Section 112 provides that funds appropriated for travel by state employees be limited to travel for activities that are critical to each state agency's mission. The section prohibits funds from being used to travel to foreign countries, other states, conferences, staff training, or other administrative functions unless the agency head approves in writing. The agency head is required to consider the use of teleconferencing and electronic communication to meet the needs of the activity before approving travel.

Section 113 provides that, notwithstanding s. 112.061, F.S., costs for lodging associated with a meeting, conference, or convention organized or sponsored in whole or in part by a state agency or the judicial branch may not exceed $225 per day. An employee may expend his or her own funds for any lodging expenses in excess of $225.

Section 114 authorizes the LBC to approve budget amendments for new fixed capital outlay projects or increase the amounts appropriated to state agencies for fixed capital outlay projects.

Section 115 requires that reviews for transfers comply with ch. 216, F.S., maximize the use of available and appropriate funds, and not be contrary to legislative policy and intent.

Section 116 provides that, notwithstanding ch. 287, F.S., state agencies are authorized to purchase vehicles from non-State Term Contract vendors provided certain conditions are met.

Section 117 amends s. 11.52, F.S., to require state agencies to provide information about the status of implementation of recently enacted legislation.

Section 118 amends s. 216.013, F.S., to provide that state executive agencies and the judicial branch are not required to develop or post a long-range program plan by September 30, 2025, for the 2026-2027 fiscal year, except in circumstances outlined in any updated written instructions prepared by the EOG in consultation with the chairs of the legislative appropriations committees.

Section 119 amends s. 216.023, F.S., to require each state agency and the judicial branch, as part of their legislative budget request, to include an inventory of all ongoing technology-related projects that have a cumulative estimated or realized cost of more than $1 million. The inventory must include specified information.

Section 120 provides that the use of state funds must be consistent with certain principles of individual freedom.

Section 121 prohibits a state agency from using state funds or contracting with certain advertising agencies or other contractors who use the services of media reliability and bias monitors.

Section 122 amends s. 440.13, F.S., to specify that, until the three-member panel adopts a schedule of maximum reimbursement allowances, certain emergency services will be reimbursed for 75 percent of usual and customary charges, unless there is a contract.

Section 123 provides that the amendments to s. 440.13, F.S., expire on July 1, 2026, and the text of the provision reverts back to that in existence on June 30, 2025.

Section 124 authorizes the Office of Policy and Budget within the EOG to conduct a review of the functions, procedures, expenditures, and policies of a local government and to submit a report to the Governor, Chief Financial Officer, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives by January 13, 2026.

Section 125 amends s. 551.118, F.S., to require the Gaming Control Commission's contract for the provision of services related to the prevention of compulsive and addictive gambling to be for one year.

Section 126 amends s. 373.0421, F.S., to specify that agricultural producers who implement best management practices adopted in s. 403.0667(7)(c)2., F.S., shall be presumed to be in compliance with the recovery or prevention strategy.

Section 127 provides that the amendments to s. 373.0421, F.S., expire on July 1, 2026, and the text of the provision reverts back to that in existence on June 30, 2025.

Section 128 freezes the interior space and parking space allotted to the Governor, the Cabinet officers, and the Legislature as of June 1, 2025, including space that the DMS must offer for lease to the House of Representatives within the Capitol Building, and provides for coordination between the DMS and the Legislature for construction projects.

Section 129 specifies that no section shall take effect if the appropriations and proviso to which it relates are vetoed.

Section 130 provides that, if any other act passed during the 2025 Regular Session contains a provision that is substantively the same as a provision in this act, but removes or otherwise is not subject to the future repeal applied by this act, the intent is for the other provision to take precedence and continue to operate.

Section 131 provides for severability.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025, except as otherwise expressly provided, or, if these provisions fail to become a law until after that date, they shall take effect upon becoming a law and shall operate retroactively to July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 24-8; House 87-18

Committee on Appropriations

SB 2504 — State Employees (Collective Bargaining)

by Appropriations Committee

This bill directs the resolution of the collective bargaining issues at impasse for the 2025-2026 fiscal year regarding state employees. These issues will be resolved based on the spending decisions included in the General Appropriations Act for the 2025-2026 fiscal year or resolved in accordance with the personnel rules in effect on June 14, 2025, and by otherwise maintaining the status quo under the language of the applicable current collective bargaining agreement.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 33-0; House 105-0

Committee on Appropriations

SB 2506 — Natural Resources

by Appropriations Committee

SB 2506, relating to Natural Resources, provides conforming changes necessary to implement the Senate's General Appropriations Act for the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

The bill amends s. 17.71, F.S., to remove the requirement that revenue sharing payments received by the state under the gaming compact be distributed to the trust fund.

The bill amends s. 253.0251, F.S., to require that all applications for full fee simple acquisition projects identify, within their acquisition plans, why the project requires a full fee simple interest to achieve public policy goals, together with the reasons full title is determined to be necessary.

The bill amends s. 259.032, F.S., to include water control districts existing pursuant to ch. 298, F.S., to those governmental entities that may contract with state agencies for land management activities.

The bill amends s. 259.037(7), F.S., to modify the requirements of the land management report that the Land Management Uniform Accounting Council is required to submit.

The bill amends s. 259.1055(6), F.S., relating to the authority of the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to enter into voluntarily agreements for environmental services to manage land, to remove the cross reference to s. 380.095, F.S.

The bill repeals s. 260.0145, F.S., relating to the Local Trail Management Grant Program and amends s. 373.026, F.S., to conform a cross reference.

The bill amends s. 373.1501, F.S., to provide a legislative declaration that acquiring land for water storage north of Lake Okeechobee is in the public interest, for a public purpose, and necessary for the public health and welfare and further provides that any acquisition of real property for a reservoir project constitutes a public purpose for which it is in the public interest to expend public funds. The amendment directs that any land necessary for implementing a reservoir project may only be acquired in accordance with law relating to acquisition of real property by a district and laws relating to eminent domain.

The bill amends s. 380.093, F.S., to require as a Tier 1 criteria within the scoring system used by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to rank projects in the Statewide Flooding and Sea Level Rise Resilience plan the degree to which the project reduces the flood risk and, thereby, increases credits awards to a community participating in the National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System.

The bill repeals s. 380.095, F.S., relating to the distribution of gaming compact revenues.

The bill amends s. 403.0673, F.S., to require the DEP to dedicate at least twenty-five percent of the funds to projects within a rural area of opportunity for the water quality improvement grant program. The amendment further requires the DEP to announce grant awards by November 1 of each fiscal year.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 29-5; House 91-13

Committee on Appropriations

SB 2508 — Judges

by Appropriations Committee

The bill, relating to Judges, conforms law to the appropriations provided in SB 2500, the General Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2025-2026. Specifically, the bill provides for the following:

Section 1 amends s. 26.031, F.S., to establish twenty-two new circuit court judgeships. The Second, Eighth, Fourteenth, and Nineteenth Judicial Circuit will each receive one additional judgeship. The Fourth, Seventh, Nineth, Tenth, Twelfth, and Fifteenth Judicial Circuit will each receive two additional judgeships. The Fifth and the Eleventh Judicial Circuit will each receive three additional judgeships.

Section 2 amends s. 34.022, F.S., to establish fifteen new county court judgeships. Bay, Clay, Hernando, Lake, Manatee, Marion, Nassau, Osceola, Palm Beach, Polk, and Sumter County will each receive one additional judgeship. Miami-Dade County will receive four additional judgeships.

Section 3 amends s. 35.06, F.S., to establish two new district court of appeal judgeships in the sixth district and provides that the number of judgeships in the second district shall be reduced by one until 13 judges remain in the second district upon each occurrence of a vacancy.

Section 4 provides that the Legislature finds and declares that this act fulfills an important state interest.

Section 5 provides an effective date of July 1, 2025.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 34-0; House 105-0

Committee on Appropriations

SB 2510 — Prekindergarten Through Grade 12 Education

by Appropriations Committee

The bill conforms law to the appropriations provided in SB 2500, the General Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2025-2026, for prekindergarten through grade 12 education. Specifically, the amendment provides for the following:

Section 1 amends s. 402.22, F.S., to conform cross-references related to the changes made in s. 1011.62, F.S., funds for operations of schools.

Section 2 modifies s. 1001.292, F.S., to require the third-party administrator to transfer funds from the Schools of Hope Revolving Loan Program to the Schools of Hope Program when the balance of the Schools of Hope Program falls below $25 million, beginning July 1, 2027.

Section 3 amends s. 1002.32, F.S., to conform a cross-reference for developmental research (laboratory) schools related to the definition of programs under the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP).

Section 4 amends s. 1002.33, F.S., to conform cross-references for charter schools related to the definition of programs and basic amounts for current operations under the FEFP.

Section 5 modifies s. 1002.333, F.S., related to persistently low-performing schools. The amendment:

- Expands the definition of a persistently low performing school.
- Expands the allowable location for a school of hope based on the availability of underused, vacant, or surplus property.
- Allows state universities and Florida Colleges System institutions to sponsor schools of hope.
- Allows a school of hope to co-locate in an underused, vacant, or surplus public school facility and requires the school district to provide facility-related services.
- Specifies that school of hope use of underused, vacant, or surplus property is at no cost.
- Provides for continuation of schools of hope funding based on performance metrics set by the State Board of Education (SBE).
- Requires reporting of schools of hope enrollment and performance data.

Section 6 amends s. 1002.37, F.S., to conform a cross-reference related to the calculation of full-time equivalent (FTE) student membership in the FEFP for students in the Florida Virtual School.

Section 7 amends s. 1002.411, F.S., to remove new student eligibility for the New Worlds Scholarship Accounts program, but allow parents to spend the remaining funds in an account on qualifying expenditures and revises the terms of account closure from 3 years of inactivity to 1 year.

Section 8 amends s. 1002.45, F.S., to conform cross-references related to the calculation of FTE student membership and basic amounts for current operations in the FEFP for students in district virtual instruction programs.

Section 9 amends s. 1003.4201, F.S., to authorize the school district reading plan to include parent resources for struggling students and information about student eligibility for the New Worlds Reading Initiative.

Section 10 amends s. 1003.4203, F.S., relating to CAPE Digital Tool certificates and industry certifications, to:

- Limit eligibility for CAPE Digital Tool certificates to students in elementary grades, beginning with the 2025-2026 school year.
- Remove requirements related to middle school students and CAPE Digital Tool certificates.
- Rename "CAPE industry certifications" as "Basic CAPE industry certifications" and establish CAPE Basic Non-articulated industry certifications and CAPE Basic Articulated industry certifications.
- Establish CAPE Pathways industry certifications issued to high school students who complete at least three courses and earn an industry certification within a single career and technical education program or program of study, and who exit with a standard high school diploma. Such industry certifications are eligible for additional FEFP funding.

Section 11 amends s. 1003.4935, F.S., to conform cross-references related to the removal of CAPE Digital Tool certificates for middle grades students and to FTE bonus funding.

Section 12 amends s.1003.498, F.S., to conform a cross-reference related to the calculation of FTE student membership in the FEFP for school district virtual course offerings.

Section 13 amends s. 1007.271, F.S., to conform a cross-reference in the dual enrollment program for the calculation of FTE student membership in the FEFP.

Section 14 amends s. 1008.44, F.S., to revise provisions relating to the CAPE Industry Certification Funding List. The amendment:

- Clarifies the assignment of industry certifications to the funding list based on categories.
- Removes the Commissioner of Education responsibility to recommend revised FTE bonus funding.
- Requires, rather than authorizes, the Commissioner of Education to limit certifications on the funding list to students in certain grades, beginning in Fiscal Year 2026-2027.

Section 15 amends s. 1010.20, F.S., to conform cross-references relating to how districts may later transfer or repurpose certain categorical funds under the FEFP.

Section 16 amends s. 1011.61, F.S., to remove the definition of a "full-time equivalent student" relating to a student participating in a student-teacher advisor program, and to conform cross-references related to the FEFP.

Section 17 amends s. 1011.62, F.S., to:

- Require school districts to report unduplicated counts of FTE students, including Family Empowerment Scholarship students.
- Require the discretionary millage compression supplement, state-funded discretionary contribution, supplemental allocation for juvenile justice education programs, and safe schools allocation to be recalculated during the fiscal year based on actual FTE student membership.
- Modify the calculation of the educational enrichment allocation and remove a requirement to prorate the allocation in certain conditions.
- Remove the requirement to prorate the exceptional student education guaranteed allocation if recalculated amounts exceed the appropriation.

The section also replaces the weighted FTE funding for specified acceleration options with a new Academic Acceleration Options Supplement as a categorical fund, appropriated annually in the General Appropriations Act. Under the new supplement:

- Each school district receives funding based on its proportionate share of statewide academic acceleration values.
- The student funding weights and teacher bonus amounts assigned to dual enrollment, early graduation, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Advanced International Certificate of Education, and CAPE industry certification outcomes remain consistent with current values, but funded through the supplement rather than the FEFP base allocation.
- The CAPE Pathways industry certification bonus is modified to require a standard high school diploma.
- Each school district must annually report its prior-year expenditures of supplement funds to the Legislature, beginning September 1, 2026.

Section 18 amends s. 1011.65, F.S., to remove the requirement for an FEFP allocation conference, and instead require the Department of Education to submit recalculated FEFP data to the Legislature and Governor for written approval prior to releasing the recalculated allocations to school districts.

Section 19 requires the DOE to make recommendations, no later than July 1, 2028, on a Title I performance incentive program to reward Title I schools that have demonstrated excellence in student achievement and learning gains.

Section 20 provides an effective date of July 1, 2025.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 25-9; House 80-24

Committee on Appropriations

SB 2514 — Health and Human Services

by Appropriations Committee

The Conference Committee Amendment for SB 2514, relating to Health and Human Services, conforms statutes to funding decisions related to Health and Human Services in the General Appropriations Act (GAA) for Fiscal Year 2025-2026. Specifically, the amendment:

- Allows dental and dental hygiene students with job offers from eligible public health programs or private practices to apply for the Dental Student Loan Repayment Program prior to beginning employment.
- Revises the Cancer Connect Collaborative's membership, establishes grant parameters and reporting requirements for the Cancer Innovation Fund, creates a five-year Research Incubator to fund targeted cancer research; and authorizes funding in the Casey DeSantis Research Program for cancer centers accredited as Comprehensive Community Cancer Program or Integrated Network Cancer Program.
- Establishes the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute VisionGen Initiative to advance genetic and epigenetic research on inherited eye diseases and ocular oncology.
- Revises suspension and revocation of patient and caregiver registrations for controlled substance offenses; allows reinstatement after sentencing with notarized attestation; penalizes false attestations.
- Requires the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) to enhance nursing home governance through resident surveys, medical director standards, safety culture reviews, and improved health data exchange.
- Strengthens nursing home oversight with new reporting, quality tracking, and a third-party comprehensive study on national quality best practices due by January 5, 2026.
- Provides continuous Medicaid eligibility for aged and disabled recipients receiving institutional or home and community-based services during redetermination, unless a material change occurs; requires federal waiver submission by October 1, 2025, to eliminate annual redeterminations.
- Requires Statewide Medicaid Managed Care (SMMC) plans to cover medically necessary biomarker testing consistent with the state plan, establish authorization procedures, and require coverage of blood-based biomarker tests for colorectal cancer screening as specified in federal Medicare determinations.
- Modifies eligibility for obtaining residency slots under the Slots for Doctors Program and repeals the Graduate Medical Education Committee.
- Expands the Training, Education, and Clinicals in Health (TEACH) Funding Program to include certain nonprofits and provides for reimbursement of nursing students.
- Revises SMMC achieved savings rebate audit procedures and excludes hospital directed payment program administrative costs from allowable income calculations.
- Authorizes the AHCA to provide Medicaid premium assistance for employer-sponsored coverage; allows exceeding standard premium assistance for high-cost patients if cost-effective; requires annual legislative reporting beginning June 30, 2026.
- Allows Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) provider to operate in a geographic service area which has an existing provider, if there is a need for additional

service availability, as determined by the AHCA and the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025, except where otherwise expressly provided.
Vote: Senate 34-0; House 105-0

Committee on Appropriations

HB 5013 — State-funded Property Reinsurance Programs

by Budget Committee and Rep. McClure

HB 5013 reduces, from $2 billion to $900 million, the General Revenue (GR) Fund transfers authorized under the Reinsurance to Assist Policyholders (RAP) Program to reimburse eligible insurers for covered losses. The bill repeals the Florida Optional Reinsurance Assistance (FORA) Program, including $1 billion of authorized General Revenue Fund transfers that are available under the program to reimburse eligible insurers for covered losses.

By reducing the cap for transfers to the RAP program and repealing the FORA program, the bill increases the amount of unallocated General Revenue funds available by $2.1 billion.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.
Vote: Senate 32-0; House 108-0

Committee on Appropriations

HB 5015 — State Group Insurance

by Budget Committee and Rep. Lopez, V.

This bill amends provisions related to implementation of formulary management for prescription drugs and supplies under the State Employees' Prescription Drug Program.

The bill requires the Department of Management Services (DMS) to submit recommendations to the Governor and the Legislative Budget Commission (LBC) by September 1, 2025, on the implementation of formulary management for prescription drugs and supplies for the 2026 plan year. The recommendations must relate to:

- Lists of excluded prescription drugs and supplies for a recommended formulary, with a comparison to the formulary in effect during the 2025 plan year. A recommended formulary is not required to authorize drugs to be made available for inclusion if a physician, advanced practice registered nurse, or physician assistant prescribing a pharmaceutical clearly states on the prescription that the excluded drug is medically necessary.
- Lists of included prescription drugs and supplies for a recommended formulary, with a comparison to the formulary in effect during the 2025 plan year.
- Prior authorization of specified prescription drugs and supplies.
- Step therapy of specified prescription drugs and supplies.

The DMS is required to submit supporting information for its recommendations: relevant information identifying the prescription drugs and supplies affected, the number of plan members and prescriptions affected for each identified drug or supply, and the cost savings expected for each recommended component implemented.

The bill prohibits prescription drugs and supplies first made available in the marketplace after January 1, 2026, from being covered by the prescription drug program until specifically included in the list of covered prescription drugs and supplies.

The LBC may consider the recommendations of the DMS in total or in part, and, beginning in the 2026 plan year, the DMS may only implement the recommendations approved by the LBC.

Effective January 1, 2026, and only if the LBC approves one or more of the recommendations of the DMS related to lists of excluded prescription drugs and supplies for a recommended formulary, the bill repeals the requirement for drugs excluded from the formulary to be available for inclusion if a physician, advanced practice registered nurse, or physician assistant prescribing a pharmaceutical clearly states on the prescription that the excluded drug is medically necessary. Additionally, the directive to the DMS to make the recommendations to the LBC is repealed. If the LBC approves one or more of the recommendations of the DMS related to lists of excluded prescription drugs and supplies for a recommended formulary, it must notify the Division of Law Revision of such approval.

The bill requires the DMS to submit on an annual basis the list of prescription drugs and supplies that will be excluded from program coverage during the next plan year. This list must be submitted by September 1 each year, instead of October 1 as provided under current law. Further, the list must include, for informational purposes only, the list of prescription drugs and supplies that are recommended to be subject to a higher copayment for the next plan year. Any prescription drugs and supplies that will be excluded from program coverage, whether on the list submitted or as proposed by the DMS during the plan year, must be approved by the LBC.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2025, except as otherwise expressly provided.
Vote: Senate 25-9; House 98-5

Committee on Appropriations

HB 5017 — Debt Reduction

by Rep. McClure (SB 1906 by Senator Brodeur)

The bill creates the Debt Reduction Program within the State Board of Administration for the purpose of reducing the state's tax-supported debt by accelerating the retirement of outstanding state bonds prior to maturity.

The bill authorizes the Division of Bond Finance to use the funds provided for the program to extinguish outstanding state bonds, other than state bonds of the Department of Transportation or the Florida Turnpike Enterprise. The bill requires the division to include information related to the bonds that were extinguished and a recommendation as to whether it is in the best interest of the state for the Legislature to continue the debt reduction program in its annual debt report.

The bill has a significant impact on state expenditures. The bill provides for an annual transfer of $250 million from the General Revenue Fund for the Debt Reduction Program.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 34-0; House 101-0

Committee on Appropriations

HJR 5019 — Budget Stabilization Fund

by Rep. McClure (SJR 1908 by Senator Hooper)

This joint resolution proposes an amendment to the Florida Constitution to raise the cap on the Budget Stabilization Fund (BSF) from 10 percent of general revenue collections to a maximum of 25 percent of collections.

The constitutional amendment, if approved by the voters, will require the Legislature to transfer $750 million each year until the BSF hits that maximum cap. The Legislature may suspend the annual transfer when funds are withdrawn from the BSF or when the Legislature determines that there is a critical state need. The Legislature may suspend the transfer once in every five years for a critical state need by passage of a separate bill for that purpose only by a two-thirds vote of the membership of each chamber.

The constitutional amendment provides a new method to withdraw funds to provide nonrecurring funding for a critical state need in a separate bill passed by a two-thirds vote. This option is not available to the Legislature until the principal balance of the BSF is 15 percent of revenue collections. Once that balance is met, the Legislature must pass a separate bill for that purpose only by a two-thirds vote to withdraw from the balance of the fund for the critical state need. The only limitation on Legislative withdrawals for a critical state need is that they cannot take the balance of the fund below 10 percent of revenue collections.

The constitutional amendment will be submitted to Florida's electors for approval or rejection at the next general election in November 2026.

If approved by at least 60 percent of the electors, the proposed amendment would take effect January 5, 2027.
Vote: Senate 29-4; House 100-1

Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government

SB 158 — Coverage for Diagnostic and Supplemental Breast Examinations

by Senator Berman

SB 158 prohibits the state group insurance program from imposing any cost-sharing liability for diagnostic breast examinations and supplemental breast examinations in any contract or plan for state employee health benefits that provides coverage for diagnostic breast examinations or supplemental breast examinations. The prohibition is effective January 1, 2026, consistent with the start of the new plan year.

The bill provides that if, under federal law, this prohibition would result in health savings account ineligibility under s. 223 of the Internal Revenue Code, the prohibition applies only to health savings account qualified high-deductible health plans with respect to the deductible of such a plan after the person has satisfied the minimum deductible under such plan.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect January 1, 2026.
Vote: Senate 38-0; House 116-0

Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government

CS/HB 1313 — Trust Funds/Re-creation/Resilient Florida Trust Fund/DEP

by Agriculture & Natural Resources Budget Subcommittee and Rep. Mooney (CS/SB 1320 by Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government and Senator Rodriguez)

The bill re-creates the Resilient Florida Trust Fund in the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and repeals the scheduled termination of the trust fund.

These provisions were approved by the Governor and take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 108-0

Committee on Banking and Insurance

CS/CS/SB 282 — Warranty Associations

by Rules Committee; Banking and Insurance Committee; and Senator Truenow

The bill revises the financial requirements of service warranty associations and home warranty associations, which are regulated by the Office of Insurance Regulation (OIR).

Current law allows a service warranty association licensed under ch. 634, part III, F.S., but holding no other license under ch. 634, F.S., to forego securing contractual liability insurance, establishing unearned premium reserves, and complying with premium writing ratios if the service warranty association, or its parent company, has a net worth of at least $100 million and provides the OIR with specified audited financial statements *and* filings made with the Securities and Exchange Commission or other documents which must be filed with a recognized exchange. Under the bill, such a service warranty association may qualify for the exemption if it provides specified audited financial statements *or* provides specified filings made with the Securities and Exchange Commission or other documents which must be filed with a recognized exchange. The effect of this change is to allow a service warranty association that is not publicly traded to be eligible for the exemption because it can qualify by only providing audited financial statements.

The bill clarifies that a service warranty association selecting the $100 million net worth option is not required to purchase contractual liability insurance coverage if the association includes "accidental damage from handling" coverage in its extended warranty contracts.

The bill provides that a contractual liability insurance policy obtained by a home warranty or service warranty association in lieu of establishing an unearned premium reserve must either pay 100 percent of claims as they are incurred or pay 100 percent of claims due in the event an association fails to pay claims when due. Further, the bill clarifies that a home warranty association or a service warranty association may use multiple contractual liability insurance policies issued from multiple insurers, rather than a single policy issued from a single insurer, to cover 100 percent of their claim exposure as an alternative to establishing an unearned premium reserve.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.

Vote: Senate 36-0; House 115-0

Committee on Banking and Insurance

CS/CS/HB 379 — Securities

by Commerce Committee; Insurance & Banking Subcommittee; and Rep. Barnaby (CS/CS/SB 988 by Fiscal Policy Committee; Banking and Insurance Committee; and Senator Truenow)

The bill revises provisions of ch. 517, F.S., the "Florida Securities and Investor Protection Act" (Act), which is subject to oversight by the Office of Financial Regulation (OFR). In 2024, the Florida Legislature enacted legislation that substantially revised ch. 517, F.S., which was based on recommendations contained in the report issued by the Chapter 517 Task Force of the Business Law Section of The Florida Bar in coordination with the OFR. The impetus for the task force is to increase the ability of small and developing Florida businesses to raise capital, while at the same time assuring and improving investor protections and enforcement measures to guard against abuse. Many of the provisions in the bill revise, clarify or provide technical changes to provisions enacted in 2024.

Exempt Securities Transactions and Exempt Securities

The bill:

- Removes the applicability of certain issuer disqualification provisions under the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Rule 506(d) on certain exempt private placement transactions by institutional securities sellers with institutional investors in Florida, which is consistent with federal rules. Rule 506(d) applies to issuers as well as a significant number of other covered persons.
- Expands the list of institutional investors exempt from securities transaction registration requirements, consistent with the Uniform Securities Act and federal rules. The list of institutional investors is expanded to include additional types of financial institutions, insurers, dealers, investment companies, pension or profit-sharing trusts, and qualified institutional buyers.
- Requires an issuer making an offering under the Florida Invest Local Exemption to file a notice of the offering and a copy of the disclosure statement with OFR.
- Provides that offers and sales made in compliance with s. 517.061(9), F.S., relating to exempt securities transactions of institutional issuers with institutional investors, are not subject to integration with other offerings. These transactions involve sophisticated investors.
- Requires the Financial Services Commission to consider certain factors when designating a foreign securities exchange or foreign securities market by rule in connection with certain exempt transactions.

Investor Protections

The bill:

- Revises the minimum information that an applicant must provide to OFR to seek payment from the Securities Guaranty Fund (fund) to include restitution orders and

clarifies the requirements that a person must meet to be eligible for payment from the fund.
- Extends the number of additional days a dealer or investment adviser may delay a disbursement or transaction from 10 to 30 business days to conduct a review if the dealer or investment adviser believes that financial exploitation of a specified adult has occurred after the expiration of the initial 15 business day delay of the transaction or disbursement. This change would make the provisions relating to securities dealers and investment advisers consistent with the provisions applicable to financial institutions.

Registration Requirements of Dealers, Associated Persons, Intermediaries, and Investment Advisers

The bill:
- Updates provisions, relating to the North American Securities Administrators Association Mergers and Acquisitions model rule, to conform with the 2024 revisions that were made because of 2022 federal law changes, and provides rulemaking authority for the Financial Services Commission to adjust earnings and revenue eligibility requirements for privately held companies every five years, if necessary.
- Creates and revises definitions and provisions relating to the application process to clarify the population of persons who must submit fingerprints as part of the registration process for dealers, associated persons, investment advisors, and intermediaries.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 114-0

Committee on Banking and Insurance

CS/CS/HB 393 — My Safe Florida Condominium Pilot Program

by Budget Committee; Housing, Agriculture & Tourism Subcommittee; and Reps. Lopez, V., Hunschofsky, and others (CS/CS/SB 592 by Regulated Industries Committee; Banking and Insurance Committee; and Senators Leek and Pizzo)

The bill revises provisions of the My Safe Florida Condominium Pilot Program (Program) within the Department of Financial Services to:

- Exclude detached units on individual parcels of land from the definition of "condominium."
- Limit participation in the Program to structures or buildings on the condominium property that are three or more stories in height and contain at least two single-family dwellings.
- Prohibit an association application for an inspection or mitigation grant unless the windows of the subject property are established as common elements in the declaration and the association has complied with the inspection requirements in ss. 553.899 and 718.112(2)(g) and (h), F.S.
- Require approval of at least 75 percent of all unit owners who reside within the structure or building that is the subject of the mitigation grant, rather than a unanimous vote of all unit owners.
- Eliminate the restrictions that limit grant contributions to:
  - For a roof-related project, $11 per square foot multiplied by the roof's square footage, not to exceed $1,000 per unit, with a maximum grant award of 50 percent of the project's cost.
  - On an opening protection-related project, a maximum grant award of $750 per window or door, not to exceed $1,500 per unit, with a maximum grant award of 50 percent of the project's cost.
- Specify the roof mitigation techniques that may receive a grant award.
- Require that the improvements must be verified during the final hurricane mitigation inspection to qualify for grant funds.
- Provide that grant funds may only be used for water intrusion mitigation devices or mitigation improvements that will result in an insurance premium mitigation credit, discount, or other rate differential for the building or structure to which such device or improvement is applied or made.
- Require that it is a condition of awarding a grant that mitigation improvements be made to all openings if doing so is necessary for the building or structure to qualify for a mitigation credit, discount, or other rate differential.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming a law.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 111-0

Committee on Banking and Insurance

CS/CS/SB 480 — Nonprofit Agricultural Organization Medical Benefit Plans

by Rules Committee; Banking and Insurance Committee; and Senator DiCeglie

The bill authorizes nonprofit agricultural organizations to offer medical benefit plans, specifies that such plans are not insurance for purposes of the Florida Insurance Code (code), and exempts such plans from insurance regulations and consumer protections that apply to health insurers, health maintenance organizations, and their policies and contracts under the code.

The exemption of these plans from the code will provide individuals and families in rural communities with access to non-insurance products and medical benefit plans, through membership in a nonprofit agricultural organization meeting specified requirements.

Further, a nonprofit agricultural organization:

- May not market or sell health benefit plans through agents licensed by the Department of Financial Services.
- Must conduct an annual financial audit that is performed by an independent certified public accountant and make a copy of the audit publicly available upon request or post it on the organization's website.
- Must provide a written disclaimer on or accompanying all applications and marketing materials for a medical benefit plan that the plan is not a health insurance policy or health maintenance organization contract and is not subject to regulatory requirements of the Florida Insurance Code.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 32-4; House 114-0

Committee on Banking and Insurance

CS/CS/HB 551 — Fire Prevention

by Intergovernmental Affairs Subcommittee; Industries & Professional Activities Subcommittee; and Rep. Borrero and others (CS/CS/CS/SB 1078 by Rules Committee; Community Affairs Committee; Banking and Insurance Committee; and Senator McClain)

The bill clarifies the simplified permitting process for certain fire alarm and fire sprinkler system projects. The bill also enhances several key provisions relating to fire alarm or fire sprinkler system permitting, inspection processes, and enforcement of local ordinances.

Simplified Permitting Process

The bill requires local governments to establish a simplified permitting process that complies with the minimum requirements of the Florida Building Code's (Building Code) simplified permitting process for fire alarm or sprinkler system projects of 20 or fewer alarm devices or sprinklers, or the replacement of an existing fire alarm panel using the same make and model as the existing panel.

The bill:

- Requires a local enforcement agency to issue a permit within 2 business days and allows a contractor to commence work that is authorized by the permit immediately after submission of a completed application.
- Specifies the local enforcement agency must provide an inspection within 3 business days after such inspection is requested.
- Clarifies that a contractor must make fire alarm project plans and specifications available to the inspector on site at each inspection.
- Requires a contractor to provide copies of any documentation requested from the local enforcement agency for recording purposes within a specified time and prohibits such agency from requiring documentation for areas or devices outside the scope of permitted work.
- Requires a local government to refund 10 percent of the original permit fee amount for each business day after the permit issuance or inspection deadlines are not met unless the local government and contractor agree in writing to a reasonable extension of time, the delay is caused by the applicant, or the delay is attributable to a force majeure or other extraordinary circumstances.
- Requires a local enforcement agency to establish a simplified permitting process that complies with s. 553.7932, F.S., by October 1, 2025.
- Defines "alteration" to mean "add, install, relocate, replace, or remove." This clarifies the definition of "fire alarm system project" which is also amended to include the replacement of an existing fire alarm panel using the same make or model as the existing panel.

Ordinance Compliance under the Florida Fire Prevention Code

The bill provides that a county or municipality may enforce only an ordinance that has been sent to the Florida Building Commission and the State Fire Marshal as of the date that the permit was submitted.

Inspection Report Improvements

The bill:

- Requires that a uniform summary inspection report for fire protection system and hydrant inspections must include the total quantity of deficiencies separated into critical and noncritical categories and a brief description of each impairment deficiency.
- Requires a contractor's detailed inspection report to be submitted with the uniform summary inspection report.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 112-2

Committee on Banking and Insurance

HB 655 — Pet Insurance and Wellness Programs

by Rep. Tuck and others (SB 1226 by Senator DiCeglie)

The bill (Chapter 2025-11, L.O.F.) creates a regulatory framework for the oversight of pet insurance and wellness programs by the Office of Insurance Regulation (OIR). The bill provides consumer protections, including policy disclosures regarding the benefits and exclusions, and a right to rescind a policy within 30 days of issuance. Although pet insurance is considered a kind of property insurance, it is essentially a health insurance policy that covers accidents and illnesses for a pet.

Unfair Methods of Competition and Unfair or Deceptive Acts

The bill provides that the following sales acts or practices for pet wellness programs by pet insurance agents are unfair methods of competition and unfair or deceptive acts:

- Marketing a wellness program as pet insurance;
- Requiring the purchase of a wellness program as a prerequisite to the purchase of pet insurance;
- Failing to provide wellness program costs that are separate and identifiable from any pet insurance policy sold by the pet insurance agent;
- Failing to provide wellness program terms and conditions that are separate from any pet insurance policy sold by the pet insurance agent;
- Offering wellness program products or coverages that duplicate products or coverages available through the pet insurance policy; and
- Misleading advertising of the wellness program.

Policy Contract Language

The bill requires that pet insurance contracts that use certain terms must use statutory definitions of those terms created by the bill. The defined terms subject to this requirement are: chronic condition, congenital anomaly or disorder, hereditary disorder, orthopedic conditions, pet insurance, pet insurance policy, policy, preexisting condition, renewal, veterinarian, waiting period, and wellness program.

Disclosures

The bill requires a pet insurer offering or selling pet insurance to disclose the following information to pet insurance applicants and policyholders:

- Whether the policy excludes coverage due to a chronic condition, a congenital anomaly or disorder, a hereditary disorder, or a preexisting condition.
- If the policy includes any other policy exclusions not listed above.
- Any policy provision that limits coverage through a waiting period, deductible, coinsurance, or an annual or lifetime policy limit. Waiting periods and applicable requirements must be clearly and prominently disclosed to consumers before purchase.

- Whether the pet insurer reduces coverage or increases premiums based on the policyholder's claim history, the age of the covered pet, or a change in the geographic location of the policyholder.
- Whether the underwriting company differs from the brand name used to market and sell the product.

Before issuing a pet insurance policy, a pet insurer is required to publish on its website a summary description of the basis or formula for the pet insurer's determination of claim payments under the policy.

Waiting Periods and Preexisting Conditions

The bill authorizes a pet insurer to issue a policy that:

- Excludes coverage on the basis of one or more preexisting conditions with appropriate written disclosure to the applicant or policyholder. The pet insurer has the burden of proving whether a preexisting condition exclusion is applicable to a claim.
- Imposes waiting periods upon effectuation of the policy which do not exceed 30 days for illnesses, diseases or orthopedic conditions not resulting from an accident. A pet insurer may not issue policies that impose waiting periods for accidents.
- A pet insurer imposing an authorized waiting period must waive the waiting period upon completion of a medical examination.

Agent Training

The bill provides that pet insurers must ensure that their agents are appropriately trained on the terms and conditions of their pet insurance products. Such training must include the following topics:

- Preexisting conditions and waiting periods.
- The differences between pet insurance and noninsurance wellness programs.
- Hereditary disorders, congenital anomalies or disorders, chronic conditions, and the way pet insurance policies address those conditions or disorders.
- Rating, underwriting, renewal, and other related administrative topics.

These provisions were approved by the Governor and take effect on January 1, 2026.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 110-0

Committee on Banking and Insurance

CS/HB 929 — Firefighter Health and Safety

by Insurance & Banking Subcommittee; and Reps. Booth, Alvarez, D., and others (CS/CS/SB 1212 by Fiscal Policy Committee; Banking and Insurance Committee; and Senators DiCeglie, Sharief, Calatayud, Bernard, Arrington, Pizzo, Osgood, Smith, Collins, Gruters, Harrell, Berman, Ingoglia, and Polsky)

The bill amends the Florida Firefighters Occupational Safety and Health Act (FFOSHA) to expand several protections for firefighters.

The bill:

- Modifies the FFOSHA's legislative intent to address work schedules, firefighter employee fatalities compensable under ch. 112, F.S., and occupational diseases or suicide.
- Requires the Division of State Fire Marshal (Division) to assist in making the firefighter employee's place of employment a safer place of work by decreasing the frequency of fatalities.
- Requires the Division to adopt rules:
  - Requiring firefighter employers to purchase firefighting gear that does not contain chemical hazards or toxic substances when such gear becomes available from more than one manufacturer. The related rule may recommend a phased-in approach.
  - Requiring firefighter employers issuing firefighting gear containing or is manufactured with chemical hazards or toxic substances to provide notice to firefighter employees that the gear issued may contain or be manufactured with chemical hazards or toxic substances.
  - Encouraging firefighter employers to implement work schedules with normally scheduled shifts that do not exceed 42 hours per workweek.
  - Employers' cancer prevention best practices related to chemical hazards or toxic substance education regarding personal protective equipment.
  - Employers' mental health best practices related to resiliency, stress management, peer support, and access to mental healthcare.
  - Expanding the duties and functions of the workplace safety committee and workplace safety coordinator to include evaluating suicide prevention programs.
- Requires the Division to develop means to identify individual firefighter employers with a high frequency of firefighter employee suicide.
- Requires the Division to conduct safety inspections and make recommendations to assist firefighter employers in reducing the number of suicides.
- Requires each firefighter employer of fewer than 20 firefighter employees with a high frequency of work-related fatalities to establish and administer a workplace safety committee or designate a workplace safety coordinator who must establish and administer certain workplace safety activities.
- Subjects a firefighter employer to penalties for failing or refusing to comply with protections prescribed by Division rule for the prevention of injuries and fatalities.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 115-0

Committee on Banking and Insurance

CS/SB 944 — Insurance Overpayment Claims Submitted to Psychologists

by Banking and Insurance Committee and Senator Davis

The bill reduces from 30 months to 12 months the timeframe for a health insurer or health maintenance organization (HMO) to submit claims for overpayment to a licensed psychologist. The bill's reduction in the look-back period results in licensed psychologists being subject to the same 12-month look-back period for insurer and HMO overpayments as health care providers licensed under chs. 458 (medical practice), 459 (osteopathic medicine), 460 (chiropractic medicine), 461 (podiatric medicine), or 466 (dentistry), F.S. The bill applies to claims for services provided on or after January 1, 2026.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 115-0

Committee on Banking and Insurance

CS/HB 999 — Legal Tender

by Commerce Committee and Reps. Bankson, LaMarca, and others (CS/CS/SB 132 by Appropriations Committee; Banking and Insurance Committee; and Senators Rodriguez, Gruters, and Burgess)

Gold Coin and Silver Coin as Legal Tender

Subject to ratification of required rules by the Legislature, effective July 1, 2026, the bill recognizes gold coin and silver coin as legal tender for payment of debts.

Gold coin and silver coin are defined as the solid, pure form of gold or silver in various physical forms. The gold coin and silver coin must be imprinted, stamped, or otherwise marked with the coin's weight and purity and may be imprinted, stamped, or otherwise marked with only the name or symbol that identifies any refiner or mint of the gold coin or silver coin. The bill provides for statutory construction to clarify the scope of gold coin and silver coin being recognized as legal tender.

The use of gold coin or silver coin for payment is optional.

Governmental entities may recognize gold coin and silver coin as legal tender for payment of taxes, charges, or dues, and may tender such coin for the payment of debts. Any governmental entity choosing to accept or tender gold coin and silver coin may only do so electronically and, unless an exemption applies, must contract with a qualified public depository that can act as a custodian of such coin.

Gold coin and silver coin recognized as legal tender are exempt from sales tax.

Regulatory Requirements

The bill establishes the following regulatory requirements related to the use of gold coin and silver coin as legal tender:

- Financial institutions and money services businesses that effectuate transactions or offer products or services relating to gold coin or silver coin must meet requirements regarding privately insuring deposits, maintaining separate accounts, contracting with a licensed custodian of gold coin or silver coin (custodian), purchasing gold coin or silver coin from an accredited refiner or wholesaler, recordkeeping, and providing consumer disclosures.
- Financial institutions and money services businesses are not required to offer products or services relating to gold coin and silver coin and financial institutions do not incur liability for refusing to offer services related to such coin.
- A financial institution which acts as a custodian is exempt from obtaining a separate license as a custodian pursuant to s. 560.204(1), F.S.
- The bill establishes a regulatory framework for custodians that hold or facilitate transactions of gold coin or silver coin that is recognized as legal tender. Custodians must

be licensed as money transmitters. The bill requires the Office of Financial Regulation (OFR) to examine a custodian before issuing a license and at least annually thereafter. A custodian must meet requirements regarding privately insuring deposits, security, recordkeeping, and maintaining separate ledger accounts. Custodians with direct contractual relationships with owners of gold coin or silver coin must comply with additional requirements relating to disclosures, account statements, return of the gold coin or silver coin, requests for audit reports, and confidentiality of records. The bill provides that a custodian is a fiduciary to its customers and provides that the transmission of gold coin or silver coin by a custodian is subject to the OFR's jurisdiction.

Conforming Provisions

The bill makes the following conforming revisions related to establishing gold coin and silver coin as legal tender:

- The Florida Control of Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing in Financial Institutions Act is amended to apply to gold coin or silver coin that is recognized as legal tender.
- The Uniform Commercial Code is clarified to specify that a person may not be compelled to tender payment in gold coin or silver coin.
- The Probate Code is clarified to provide that gold coin or silver coin recognized as legal tender is not tangible personal property and to provide for applicability of the provision.
- The bill directs the Division of Law Revision to rename ch. 560, part II, F.S., and to incorporate the new sections created in the bill within certain parts of ch. 560, F.S.

Implementation and Legislative Ratification of Rules

Effective upon becoming law, the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and the Financial Services Commission (FSC) must adopt rules to implement the bill. The Department of Financial Services and the OFR must submit a report to the Legislature containing the adopted rules, additional statutory recommendations, and possible unintended consequences and provide such report and rules to the Legislature by November 1, 2025. The rules adopted by the CFO and FSC must be ratified by the Legislature before becoming effective.

The bill does not take effect July 1, 2026, unless reenacted by the Legislature, which is done to ensure that required rules have been ratified and this new system of legal tender is properly implemented before taking effect.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, except as otherwise expressly provided, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.
Vote: Senate 38-0; House 113-0

Committee on Banking and Insurance

CS/HB 1549 — Financial Services

by Insurance & Banking Subcommittee and Rep. Maggard and others (CS/CS/SB 1612 by Fiscal Policy Committee; Banking and Insurance Committee; and Senator Grall)

The bill amends the financial institutions codes, revises the definition of a control person of a money services business, and amends requirements for insurance coverage to be exported to (written by) a surplus lines insurer.

Financial Institutions Code

The bill amends the financial institutions codes by:

- Changing the due dates by which time a financial institution must pay semiannual assessments to March 31 and September 30 and specifying the method of when such assessments must be made.
- Authorizing the Office of Financial Regulation (OFR) to issue a certificate of acquisition to an acquiring financial institution after completing the plan and submitting any evidence required by the OFR to confirm the transaction's completion.
- Authorizing a credit union elected officer, director, or committee member to be reimbursed for necessary expenses incidental to performing official business.
- Repealing the requirement for credit unions to maintain a regular reserve and modifies the definition of the term "equity" to remove reference to "regular reserve."
- Removing a timeframe for completing the stock offering and filing a final list of subscribers to the OFR by directors of a proposed new bank or trust company.
- Modifying the period in which a proposed bank or trust company must open and conduct a general commercial bank or trust company business.

Money Services Businesses

The bill narrows the definition of "control person" of a money services business (MSB) to a shareholder who directly or indirectly has the power to vote 25 percent or more, or to sell or direct the sale of 25 percent or more, of a class of voting securities, instead of defining "control person" as any shareholder who owns 25 percent or more of a class of the company's equity securities. This will result in:

- Fewer shareholders being subject to fingerprints as an MSB licensing application requirement.
- Eliminating reporting to the OFR when a person obtains 25 percent or more of the non-voting securities of an MSB.
- Eliminating the authority of the OFR to take regulatory action against an MSB license when a person acquires 25 percent or more of the nonvoting securities of the MSB when such person has been convicted of a:
    - Felony involving fraud, moral turpitude, or dishonest dealing;
    - Money laundering under 18 USC 1956 or violating federal reporting requirements under 31 USC 5324; or

- Misappropriation, conversion, or unlawful withholding of funds.

Surplus Lines Insurers

The bill removes current requirements regarding the eligibility of insurance coverage to be exported to (written by) a surplus lines insurer. The bill eliminates the requirements that the full amount of the surplus lines insurance policy must not be procurable from an insurer authorized to transact and that is actually writing that kind and class of insurance after the retail or producing agent's "diligent effort," and that the amount of insurance exported to a surplus lines policy must be only the excess over the amount procurable from authorized insurers.

As a result of the deleted requirements, surplus lines agents need not verify that a "diligent effort" has been made by requiring a properly documented statement of diligent effort from the retail or producing agent and by seeking coverage from and having been rejected by a specified number of authorized insurers currently writing this type of coverage and documenting these rejections. The repeal of the diligent effort requirement results in eliminating the requirement that the surplus lines agent's reliance on the diligent effort must be reasonable in the circumstances, and such reasonableness must be based on several specified factors.

The bill adds additional language to the required disclosure that an agent must give to an insured when exporting coverage to a surplus lines insurer. The additional disclosure is that surplus lines insurers' policy rates and forms are not approved by any Florida regulatory agency. The bill establishes a presumption that the insured has been informed and knows that other insurance coverage may be available if the insured acknowledges such disclosure by signature.

The bill repeals rulemaking authority for the Financial Services Commission (FSC) to declare eligible for export generally to surplus lines any class or classes of insurance coverage or risk for which it finds that there is no reasonable or adequate market among authorized insurers, and the provisions for which such rulemaking authority does not apply.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-1; House 114-0

Committee on Banking and Insurance

HB 7003 — OGSR/Financial Technology Sandbox Applications/OFR

by Government Operations Subcommittee and Rep. Sapp (SB 7008 by Banking and Insurance Committee and Senator Sharief)

The bill (Chapter 2025-20, L.O.F.) saves from repeal the public records exemption for certain information held by the Office of Financial Regulation (OFR) relating to applications to participate in the Financial Technology Sandbox, which offers financial technology innovators a more flexible regulatory framework to operate in Florida for a limited time. The reenacted public records exemption applies to the following information:

- The reasons why the general law for which an exception or waiver is sought prevent the innovative financial product or service from being made available to consumers.
- Information related to the nature of the innovative financial product or service proposed to be made available to consumers in the Financial Technology Sandbox, including all relevant technical details.
- The business plan proposed by the applicant including information relating to company information, market analysis, financial projections or pro forma financial statements, and evidence of the financial viability of the applicant.
- Information provided for evaluation of whether the applicant has a sufficient plan to test, monitor, and assess the innovative financial product and service, including whether the applicant has the necessary personnel and adequate financial and technical expertise.

The Open Government Sunset Review Act requires the Legislature to review each public record exemption 5 years after enactment. The affected exemption stands repealed on October 2, 2025, unless reenacted by the Legislature. This bill removes the scheduled repeal of the exemptions, thereby continuing the confidential and exempt status of the information.

These provisions were approved by the Governor and take effect October 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 113-0

Committee on Banking and Insurance

CS/SB 7010 — OGSR/Department of Financial Services

by Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee and Banking and Insurance Committee

The bill reenacts and saves from repeal the public records exemption for information held by the Department of Financial Services when acting as receiver for an insolvent insurer, and narrows the information that will continue to be confidential and exempt from public records copying and inspection requirements, thus providing greater public disclosure regarding insolvent insurance companies. The information that will continue to be confidential and exempt only includes personal financial and health information of consumers, certain personnel information of the insurer, consumer claim files, and information received from the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) and other governmental entities which is confidential or exempt if held by the NAIC or such governmental entity. Information that will no longer be confidential and exempt is:

- Certain underwriting files.
- Names, benefits, and compensation of executive officers.
- An own-risk and solvency assessment summary report, a substantially similar report, and supporting documents.
- A corporate governance annual disclosure and supporting documents.

The Open Government Sunset Review Act requires the Legislature to review each public record exemption 5 years after enactment. The affected exemption stands repealed on October 2, 2025, unless reenacted by the Legislature. This bill removes the scheduled repeal of the exemptions, thereby continuing the confidential and exempt status of the information.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect October 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 35-0; House 114-0

Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

CS/SB 106 — Exploitation of Vulnerable Adults

by Rules Committee and Senator Martin

The bill creates a process to obtain substitute service on an unascertainable respondent in and action for an injunction to protect a vulnerable adult from exploitation. The injunction may be used to stop a proposed or initiated transfer of funds or property from a vulnerable adult to an unascertainable person.

To effectuate this substitute service, a petitioner must file a detailed affidavit with a court which shows:

- Why the petitioner believes the respondent is an unascertainable respondent and how he or she and the vulnerable adult have been in contact;
- All identifying information known to the petitioner or vulnerable adult about the unascertainable respondent;
- The facts that have lead the petitioner to believe that a proposed or initiated transfer of funds or property from a vulnerable adult to the unascertainable person is in response to a fraudulent request; and
- A petitioner's attempts to identify the unascertainable respondent.

When the petitioner files the sworn affidavit, the court must enter an order requiring the petitioner to serve the unascertainable respondent using the same means of communication that the unascertainable person used to communicate with the vulnerable adult within 2 business days after the issuance of the temporary injunction or setting of a final hearing. The petitioner must file proof that he or she has attempted to serve the unascertainable respondent.

Issuance of a written final order of injunction suspends any proposed or initiated transfer of funds or property from the vulnerable adult to the unascertainable person for 30 days. When the period expires, the funds or property will be distributed in accordance with a written court order.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 115-0

Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

CS/CS/HB 531 — Public Education of Background Screening Requirements

by Health Care Budget Subcommittee; Human Services Subcommittee; and Reps. Hunschofsky, Trabulsy and others (CS/SB 614 by Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee and Senator Polsky)

The bill requires the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA), in consultation with all specified agencies, to develop and maintain a user-friendly, public-facing webpage to serve as a centralized hub for education and awareness of the Care Provider Background Screening Clearinghouse and state background screening processes and standards. The webpage must maintain up to date information and explain the background screening process through the clearinghouse, Level 2 screening requirements, fingerprinting procedures, and include a searchable job catalog, disqualifying offenses, exemption steps, and a downloadable checklist with timelines and details of the process.

Additionally, the bill requires all specified agencies to prominently link to this resource from their websites and require the inclusion of the link in all job postings by qualified entities. The webpage must be active by January 1, 2026 and must be updated annually by October 1.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 107-0

Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

CS/CS/HB 633 — Behavioral Health Managing Entities

by Health Care Budget Subcommittee; Human Services Subcommittee; and Rep. Koster and others (CS/SB 1354 by Children, Families, and Elder Affairs and Senator Trumbull)

The bill requires the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to contract for biennial operational and financial audits of the behavioral health managing entities (ME) that are charged with coordinating the state's safety net program for mental health and substance use disorder services. The audits must include business practices, financial records, services administered, payment methods, referral patterns, network adequacy information, and expenditures and claims to include potential Medicaid service duplication. A final report must be submitted to the Governor and Legislature by December 1, 2025.

The bill establishes performance standards and metrics that must be submitted monthly to the DCF in a standardized electronic format. This requires the MEs to report specific data related to:

- Service accessibility;
- Community behavioral health outcomes;
- Diversion from acute care;
- Integration with child welfare services;
- High-utilizer rates;
- Post-hospitalization outpatient care;
- Appointment wait times; and
- Emergency room visits for behavioral health issues.

The bill also requires the DCF to post the ME performance information to its website by the 22nd of every month. These posted measures must reflect ME performance for the previous calendar month, year-to-date totals, and annual trends.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 38-0; House 113-0

Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

CS/SB 738 — Child Care and Early Learning Providers

by Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee and Senator Burton

The bill revises and modernizes several requirements related to child care facility licensure, personnel training, facility inspections, and licensure violation enforcement. The bill:

- Allows the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to create three classification levels for violations relating to the health and safety of a child and requires a class three violation to be the least serious and must be the same incident at least three times within two years.
- Updates abbreviated inspection standards to include these new classification levels, requires at least two years of consecutive licensure, and requires two full onsite renewal inspections in the most recent two years with no current uncorrected violations or open complaints.
- Requires the DCF to provide criminal history record check results to child care facilities within three business days of receipt.
- Removes the requirement for child care facilities to provide parents with pagers or beepers during drop-in child care; to provide parents with information regarding the influenza virus and the dangers of a distracted adult leaving a child in a vehicle; and to develop a program to assist in preventing and avoiding physical and mental abuse.
- Revises introductory training for child care personnel and requires in-person training for at least one staff person trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation.
- Requires the DCF to provide minimum required training coursework online.
- Removes the requirement for the DCF to develop standards for specialized child care facilities for the care of mildly ill children.
- Requires the DCF to issue current or prospective child care personnel a 45-day provisional-hire status upon delayed background screening, provided direct supervision of that person by a fully screened and trained staff member when in contact with children.
- Requires a county commission that elects to license their own child care facilities to annually affirm this decision through a majority vote to designate a local licensing agency.
- Exempts child care facilities and family day care homes certified by the U.S. Department of Defense or the U.S. Coast Guard from licensure in certain instances.

The bill also exempts preschools from special assessments levied by municipalities. Further, the bill provides an exemption from licensing, except for the screening of personnel, for a child care facility that solely provides child care to certain eligible children.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 114-0

Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

CS/HB 901 — Court-appointed Psychologists

By Judiciary Committee and Rep. Borrero and others (CS/SB 976 by Children, Families, and Elder Affairs and Senator Bernard)

The bill clarifies the process which a parent seeking to disqualify a court-appointed psychologist must follow and provides that an administrative complaint against a court-appointed psychologist may not be filed until the complainant has moved to disqualify the psychologist.

The bill further clarifies that the claimant is responsible for all reasonable attorney fees in any supplemental legal actions against the court-appointed psychologist in his or her capacity as a court appointee, if held not liable, and does not apply to the underlying legal action.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 112-4

Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

CS/CS/HB 969 — Reporting of Student Mental Health Outcomes

by Human Services Subcommittee; Education Administration Subcommittee; and Rep. Cassel and others (CS/SB 1310 by Children, Families, and Elder Affairs and Senator Bradley)

The bill requires the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA), in consultation with the Department of Children and Families (DCF), the Department of Education (DOE), the Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute (Institute), and other relevant stakeholders to evaluate school district student mental health services and supports and compliance with statutory requirements.

The bill requires the DOE, school district threat management coordinators, and mental health coordinators to provide specified information to the OPPAGA for reporting and evaluation purposes.

The bill requires the DCF and the Institute to coordinate with the OPPAGA and provide requested information related to the performance of the coordinated behavioral health system of care pursuant to Ch. 394, F.S.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 106-1

Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

CS/CS/HB 1091 — Substance Abuse and Mental Health Care

by Health & Human Services Committee; Human Services Subcommittee; and Rep. Gonzalez Pittman and others (CS/CS/CS/SB 1240 by Rules Committee; Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services; Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee; and Senator Calatayud)

The bill integrates the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline Call Center into the state mental health crisis response network and requires the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to authorize, regulate, and oversee Florida's 988 Lifeline program.

The bill removes the "needs assessment" requirement for licensure of medication-assisted treatment programs for opioid addiction.

The bill establishes enhanced training standards for mental health professionals conducting forensic evaluations, emphasizing competency restoration, evidence-based practices, and placement alternatives to ensure consistent and effective forensic evaluations. The bill requires court-appointed mental health experts performing forensic evaluations to complete DCF-approved forensic training and ongoing education.

The bill clarifies the duties of designated receiving facilities for patients transferred under involuntary examination. If a physician determines the patient still poses a threat, the facility is not required to release them, even if the transfer was delayed or notification was late.

The bill also makes several conforming and technical changes to involuntary outpatient services under the Baker Act to clarify and align statute with multiple changes over the previous two sessions.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 112-0

Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

SB 1286 — Harming or Neglecting Children

by Senators Grall and Sharief

The bill amends the definition of harm and neglect of a child in both dependency and criminal law to allow caregivers to let a sufficiently mature child partake in independent, unsupervised activities without considering these actions as harm or neglect of a child.

For dependency law, the bill considers independent, unsupervised activities as harm only if the child is subjected to obvious danger of which the caregiver knew or should have known, or the child cannot exercise the reasonable judgment required to avoid serious harm upon responding to physical or emotional crises.

The bill considers independent, unsupervised activities as neglect only if such activities constitute reckless conduct that endangers the health or safety of the child.

For criminal law, the bill amends the definition of neglect of a child to add a willful standard in a caregiver's failure or omission to provide a child with the necessary services to maintain the child's physical and mental health and excludes independent, unsupervised activities that a child engages in from the definition of criminal neglect of a child, unless the activities constitute a willful and wanton conduct that endangers the health or safety of the child.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 116-0

Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

CS/HB 1567 — Insulin Administration by Direct Support Professionals and Relatives

by Human Services Subcommittee and Rep. Tuck and others (CS/CS/SB 1736 by Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services; Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee; and Senators Grall, Sharief, and Bradley)

The bill creates a new section of law to allow a direct-support professional or the relative of an individual in an Agency for Persons with Disabilities licensed group home facility to administer insulin to a client with a developmental disability. The bill provides that the administration of insulin includes sliding scale insulin therapy, to include the calculation of an insulin dose based on current blood glucose and the administration of that calculated dose subcutaneously using an insulin pen containing premeasured doses or a syringe filled with the calculated dose drawn from a vial of insulin.

The bill defines the term "direct-support professional" to mean an individual paid to provide services directly to a client with developmental disabilities that receives home and community-based services.

The bill allows direct-support professionals or relatives to administer insulin to individuals if the group home facility provides training and adopts policies and procedures governing the administration of insulin by direct-support professionals or relatives.

The bill further provides immunity from civil liability to group home facilities that are compliant with the requirements for the administration of insulin. The bill provides civil and criminal immunity to direct-support professionals or relatives for the administration of insulin in group home facilities, so long as the direct-support professional or relative were compliant with the requirements of administration.

The bill also adds subcutaneous administration of insulin and epinephrine by self-administration devices to existing medication administration law that allows an unlicensed direct service provider to administer or supervise the self-administration of certain medications.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 38-0; House 111-0

Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

CS/CS/SB 1620 — Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders

by Fiscal Policy Committee; Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee; and Senator Rouson

The bill strengthens Florida's Mental Health Act by codifying recommendations made by Florida's Commission on Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder. The bill makes the following specific changes to Florida's Mental Health Act:

- Defines person-first language to mean language used in a professional medical setting must emphasize the patient as a person rather than his or her disability or illness and requires use and promotion of person-first language as the standard in professional behavioral health settings.
- Requires the continued promotion of best practices in crisis intervention and trauma-informed care.
- Requires that individualized treatment plans be updated every 30 days that the patient is in a receiving or treatment facility, with those patients in a facility longer than 24 months having plans updated every 60 days.
- Requires the use and statewide integration of the Daily Living Activities-20 (DLA-20) functional assessment tool.
- Requires the Department of Children and Families (DCF), in consultation with the Department of Education (DOE), to conduct a biennial review of school-based behavioral health services and behavioral health telehealth access.
- Requires the DCF to conduct biennial reviews and the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) to prioritize licensing for short-term residential treatment facilities in underserved counties and high-need areas.

The bill also clarifies the role of the Florida Center for Behavioral Health Workforce at the University of South Florida's Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute to allow the center to request depersonalized information held by the Boards of Clinical Social Work, Marriage and Family Therapy, and Mental Health Counseling to better research and develop strategies for behavioral health workforce enhancement.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 34-3; House 116-0

Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

CS/SB 7012 — Child Welfare

by Fiscal Policy Committee and Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee

The bill creates additional requirements for the collection and maintenance of data on the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) and requires a study of residential bed capacity and a gap analysis of non-residential services for victims of CSEC.

The bill allows the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to waive operational requirements and issue provisional certificates to new domestic violence centers if there is an emergency need for such a center and the domestic violence center fulfills other eligibility requirements.

The bill allows the DCF to grant limited exemptions to disqualification from background screenings due to certain disqualifying offenses, and limits individuals who receive the exemption to working with specific populations.

The bill requires the DCF to create a Child Protective Investigator (CPI) and case manager recruitment program for individuals who have previously held public safety and service positions and have a continued desire to serve their communities. The bill also requires the DCF to collaborate with community-based care (CBC) lead agencies to create a referral system for case manager applicants. The bill also requires the DCF to convene a case management workforce workgroup composed of child welfare professionals to address current policy gaps and develop actionable recommendations to improve case management.

The bill requires the DCF to create a pilot program for treatment foster care, or a substantially similar evidence-based program of professional foster care. This pilot program is intended to introduce a short-term, family-like placement option for children in foster care that have high resource indicators or children that are stepping down from a placement in an inpatient residential treatment. The bill requires specialized training requirements for foster parents and a 24 hour service to provide crisis intervention and placement stabilization services if needed.

The bill removes a recently added requirement for CBCs to post a fidelity bond to cover potential costs and penalties associated with board members' failures to disclose conflicts of interest. The bill also limits the liability of lead agency subcontractors for the acts or omissions of lead agencies or the DCF for contracts entered into or renewed after July 1, 2025.

The bill adds an exemption from state gift laws for incentives provided to state employees participating in child welfare research and evaluation projects performed by the Florida Institute for Child Welfare.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025, except as otherwise expressly provided in the bill.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 98-0

Committee on Commerce and Tourism

CS/CS/SB 232 — Debt Collection

by Banking and Insurance Committee; Commerce and Tourism Committee; and Senator Rodriguez

The bill revises the Florida Consumer Collection Practices Act to allow any person attempting to collect on a debt to communicate with a debtor via email between 9 p.m. and 8 a.m. The bill includes preamble clauses that acknowledge emails were not commonly used or explicitly contemplated when the Florida Legislature prohibited the practice of communicating with a consumer at night. The preamble clauses also identify the Legislative intent of the bill is to update the law and clarify that emails are not prohibited between such hours because they are less invasive and less disruptive than telephone calls.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming a law.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 116-0

Committee on Commerce and Tourism

CS/SB 316 — Limited Liability Companies

by Rules Committee and Senator Berman

The bill amends the Florida Revised Limited Liability Company Act in ch. 605, F.S., to provide for the creation and regulation of protected series limited liability companies (LLC) under Florida law. Currently, Florida law does not allow for the creation of a protected series LLC within a series LLC formed in this state. A series LLC consists of an overarching, "umbrella" LLC under which one or more protected series LLCs are created; each protected series LLC has its own assets and liabilities and is treated as if it were a separate LLC. The bill specifies definitions, operations and governance, powers and duties, liability limitations, and requirements related to service and notice, reporting, management, merger, and dissolution.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2026.
Vote: Senate 35-1; House 115-0

Committee on Commerce and Tourism

CS/CS/HB 515 — Uniform Commercial Code

by Judiciary Committee; Civil Justice & Claims Subcommittee; and Rep. Gentry (CS/CS/SB 1666 by Rules Committee; Commerce and Tourism Committee; and Senator Grall)

The bill incorporates Article 12 of the Model Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) into Florida's UCC. In doing so, the bill provides updated rules for commercial contracts and financial transactions involving emerging technologies, such as cryptocurrencies and other electronic assets. Cryptocurrencies are digital financial instruments, the use of which is not contemplated under Florida's current UCC. Under the bill, attorneys, judges, and other practitioners have a legal framework to guide their implementation and enforcement of commercial contracts and transactions which rely on emerging technologies instead of traditional forms of money.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 38-0; House 115-0

Committee on Commerce and Tourism

CS/SB 678 — Pawnbroker Transaction Forms

by Commerce and Tourism Committee and Senator Truenow

The bill authorizes pawnbroker transaction forms, which are approved by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and are used to record pawns and purchases by pawnbrokers, to be in digital or print format instead of only print format. Digital forms must be in a font size of at least 12 points. Pawnbrokers may use either format.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 115-0

Committee on Commerce and Tourism

HB 827 — Statewide Study on Automation and Workforce Impact

By Rep. Spencer and others (SB 936 by Senator Davis)

The bill requires the Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research (Bureau) at the Florida Department of Commerce to perform a statewide study on the economic impact of automation, robotics, and artificial intelligence on the state's workforce with a specific focus on job losses and gains due to artificial intelligence and automation. By December 1, 2025, and every three years after that, the Bureau must perform the study and submit a report of its findings and policy recommendations to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 35-0; House 112-1

Committee on Commerce and Tourism

CS/HB 915 — Advertisements for Representation Services

by Civil Justice & Claims Subcommittee and Reps. López, J., Woodson, and others (CS/CS/SB 846 by Rules Committee; Commerce and Tourism Committee; and Senators Polsky, Pizzo, Smith, and Arrington)

This bill amends existing statutes and introduces new provisions addressing notary public fraud and the unlicensed practice of law in connection with immigration matters. The bill prohibits a notary public who is not authorized to represent a person in an immigration matter, when advertising his or her notary public services, from using the terms notario público, notario, immigration assistant, immigration consultant, or immigration specialist, or any other designation of title, in any language, which conveys or implies that he or she possesses professional legal skills in immigration law.

The bill requires unlicensed or unauthorized individuals offering immigration services to post conspicuous notices on their websites and at their places of business in relevant languages which state that the individuals are not accredited to represent anyone in an immigration matter, licensed to practice law, provide legal advice, or accept fees for legal advice.

A person aggrieved by these provisions has a civil cause of action against the entity, person, or business violating such provisions for declaratory or injunctive relief, actual damages, and reasonable attorney fees and costs.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 114-1

Committee on Commerce and Tourism

CS/CS/HB 1161 — Removal of Altered Sexual Depictions Posted Without Consent

by Commerce Committee; Industries & Professional Activities Subcommittee; and Rep. Duggan and others (CS/SB 1400 by Commerce and Tourism Committee and Senator Calatayud)

The bill requires certain internet platforms to establish a process by which a person may notify and request removal of an altered sexual depiction that was published without the person's consent. Altered sexual depictions are photos or videos which are digitally modified with nude body parts or sexual conduct, colloquially known as deepfake porn, as defined in s. 836.13, F.S. Covered internet platforms are those which primarily provide a forum for user-generated content or for which it is in the regular course of business to publish, curate, or host content of nonconsensual altered sexual depictions.

The bill requires a covered platform, by December 31, 2025, to provide clear and conspicuous notice of its notice and removal process for an individual, or an authorized person acting on their behalf, to request removal of altered sexual depictions posted without the individual's consent. Within 48 hours of receiving a valid notification and request for removal, the covered platform must remove the altered sexual depiction and make reasonable efforts to identify and remove identical copies of such depiction.

Under the bill, a failure to reasonably comply with the notice and removal process constitutes an unfair or a deceptive act or practice under the Florida Deceptive and Unfair Trade Practices Act (FDUTPA). Under FDUTPA, the Department of Legal Affairs or the state attorney's office in the appropriate judicial circuit may seek declaratory judgment, injunctive relief, actual damages on behalf of consumers; cease and desist orders; and civil penalties of up to $10,000 per violation. An affected individual may also seek relief under FDUTPA, including declaratory judgment, injunctive relief, actual damages, attorney fees, and court costs.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming a law.
Vote: Senate 38-0; House 116-0

Committee on Commerce and Tourism

CS/CS/CS/HB 1219 — Employment Agreements

by Commerce Committee; Judiciary Committee; Industries & Professional Activities Subcommittee; and Rep. Koster (CS/CS/CS/SB 922 by Rules Committee; Judiciary Committee; Commerce and Tourism Committee; and Senator Leek)

This bill creates the "Florida Contracts Honoring Opportunity, Investment, Confidentiality, and Economic Growth (CHOICE) Act," which establishes the framework for the use of a covered garden leave agreement and a covered noncompete agreement between a covered employer and a covered employee. The bill provides that a covered garden leave agreement or a covered noncompete agreement does not violate state antitrust laws. In specified circumstances, an employee must be given 7 days to review a covered agreement before signing. The bill limits covered agreements to 4 years and provides for the enforcement of covered agreements.

A covered employee is an employee or an individual contractor who earns or is reasonably expected to earn a salary greater than twice the annual mean wage of the county in Florida which the employer has its principal place of business, or the county in Florida in which the employee resides if the employer is not principally based in this state. A covered garden leave agreement is an agreement to keep paying an existing covered employee even though the employee is not required to appear at work or produce any output. The employee agrees not to take any other employment during that period, which is up to 4 years pursuant to the agreement, without the permission of the employer. A covered noncompete agreement is an agreement usually signed at the beginning of employment whereby the covered employee agrees not to work for a competitor for a set length of time, up to 4 years, and within a geographic area after termination of employment.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 28-9; House 91-21

Committee on Commerce and Tourism

CS/CS/HB 1359 — Feasibility Study Relating to Statewide Pawn Data Database

by Information Technology Budget & Policy Subcommittee; Criminal Justice Subcommittee; and Rep. Michael (CS/CS/SB 1252 by Fiscal Policy Committee; Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice; and Senator Yarborough)

The bill requires the Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) to conduct a feasibility study on the creation of a statewide pawn data database. The creation of a statewide pawn data database, at a minimum, must:

- Allow law enforcement agencies in all counties in this state to access, update, and share pawn data in real time;
- Be provided free of charge to all law enforcement agencies in this state;
- Be interoperable with different law enforcement databases, software solutions, and jurisdictions and meet established data standards to facilitate seamless communication between law enforcement agencies; and
- Ensure compliance with applicable privacy and security laws.

The FDLE must complete the study as authorized and consistent with funding specifically appropriated in the General Appropriations Act and report the feasibility study results to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by January 1, 2026.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 113-0

Committee on Community Affairs

CS/SB 68 — Health Facilities

by Health Policy Committee and Senator Martin

Health Facilities Authorities

Health facilities authorities (HFAs) are special districts created by counties or municipalities pursuant to the Health Facilities Authority Law in ch. 154, F.S., to assist nonprofit health care organizations in financing the acquisition, construction, expansion, or renovation of health care facilities. HFAs primarily issue tax-exempt revenue bonds, which provide lower-cost financing options for eligible projects.

Current law allows HFAs to provide financial assistance only to not-for-profit corporations. As a result, a health facility or health care system that is organized as a not-for-profit limited liability company is precluded from receiving financing under the law. The bill authorizes not-for-profit limited liability companies and not-for-profit corporate parents of health systems to receive financing from HFAs.

The bill also authorizes HFAs to structure their transactions as loan agreements. Specifically, the bill authorizes HFAs to make mortgages, or other secured or unsecured loans, to or for the benefit of a health facility, in accordance with an agreement between the HFA and the facility. The bill requires such loans to be used to finance the cost of a project, or to refund or refinance outstanding bonds, obligations, loans, indebtedness, or advances issued, made, given, or incurred by a health facility.

Fentanyl Testing

The bill also amends a provision of CS/HB 1195, passed prior to CS/SB 68 during the 2025 Regular Session and which subsequently became law (Chapter 2025-19, L.O.F.). Effective July 1, 2025, CS/HB 1195 requires hospitals to test a patient for fentanyl if the patient is receiving emergency services and care for a possible drug overdose and the hospital conducts a urine test to assist in diagnosing the individual. If the urine test comes back positive for fentanyl, the hospital *must* perform a confirmation test and retain the results of the urine test and the confirmation test as part of the patient's clinical record.

The bill (CS/SB 68) amends the fentanyl testing requirement in CS/HB 1195 to *authorize,* instead of *require*, hospitals to perform a confirmation test if a urine test comes back positive for fentanyl.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 113-0

Committee on Community Affairs

SB 118 — Regulation of Presidential Libraries

by Senators Brodeur, Gaetz, DiCeglie, Fine, Gruters, Avila, and Ingoglia

The bill preempts to the state all regulation of the establishment, maintenance, activities, and operations of any presidential library within its jurisdiction and defers regulation of such institutions to the federal government. Presidential libraries are archives and museums that bring together the documents, historical materials, and artifacts of a United States President during his administration for public use including preservation, research, and visitation.

Under the bill, a local government may not enact or enforce any ordinance, resolution, rule, or other measure governing a presidential library or impose any requirement or restriction upon such libraries, except as otherwise authorized by federal law.

The bill defines a presidential library as an institution administered or designated under the federal Presidential Libraries Act.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.
Vote: Senate 36-3; House 89-20

Committee on Community Affairs

CS/CS/SB 180 — Emergencies

by Appropriations Committee; Community Affairs Committee; and Senator DiCeglie

The bill makes various changes relating to the preparation and response activities of state and local government when emergencies impact the state. Regarding the responsibilities of the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM), the bill:

- Requires the FDEM, for the purpose of the Hurricane Loss Mitigation Program, to prioritize use of funds for shelters located in counties, rather than regional planning councils, that have a shelter deficit, and for projects that are publicly owned, other than schools.
- Combines the FDEM shelter reports and requires it to be submitted to the Governor and Legislature annually, rather than biennially, and requires prioritization of non-school public facilities to be recommended for retrofit.
- Directs the FDEM to conduct annual regional hurricane readiness sessions and provide biennial emergency management training for specified county and municipal personnel.
- Renames the Natural Hazards Interagency Workgroup as the "Natural Hazards Risks and Mitigation Interagency Coordinating Group," of which the executive director of the FDEM is the administrator and substantially revises the membership and duties of the group.
- Requires the FDEM to report annually to the Legislature on the expenditures related to emergencies incurred over the past year, including a summary of the event, detailed expenditures, and an accounting of all inventory and assets purchased (effective January 1, 2026).
- Requires contracts executed to support the response to a declared state of emergency to be posted on the state's secure contract tracking system (effective January 1, 2026).
- Provides additional requirements for the FDEM handling of federal funds, including legislative notification for innovative uses and standardizing and streamlining processes related to the distribution of federal financial assistance to state and local agencies.
- Requires state agencies, counties, and municipalities to notify the FDEM by May 1 annually of the person designated as the emergency contact for the state agency, county, or municipality, and his or her alternate.
- Requires the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to submit and biannually update a Flood Inventory and Restoration Report to the FDEM, working with water management districts, local governments, and operators of public and private stormwater systems to identify flooding risks, provide inspection schedules, and list funding priorities.
- Requires the FDEM to consult with local governments and the appropriate state agencies to recommend statutory changes to streamline the permitting process for repairing and rebuilding structures damaged by natural emergencies and submit a report to the Legislature by July 1, 2026.

Regarding the emergency preparedness and response duties and directives of local governments, the bill:

- Requires each county and municipality to post certain information related to emergency response and preparation on its website, including frequently asked questions related to natural emergency response and preparedness, a disaster supply and emergency shelter list, links to information about flood zone, a checklist for post-storm recovery, and information specific to persons with disabilities.
- Requires each county and municipality to develop a post-storm permitting plan to expedite recovery and rebuilding and ensure sufficient staffing for increased permitting and inspection demands. Each local government must also publish on its website a post-storm permitting guide to advise residents of post-storm permitting procedures and rebuilding requirements.
- Directs each county and municipality to apply to the DEP for authorization of at least one debris management site and encourages local governments to add an addendum to existing solid waste contracts for the collection of storm-generated debris.
- Prohibits each county and municipality located within an area for which a state of emergency is declared for a hurricane or tropical storm from increasing building permit or inspection fees for 180 days after the declaration.
- Prohibits a local government participating in the National Flood Insurance Program from adopting cumulative substantial improvement periods, also known as "lookback ordinances."
- Prohibits the imposition of impact fees for replacement structures if the land use is the same as the original, unless a replacement structure increases demand on public facilities.
- Increases the threshold above which a property appraiser must assess repairs at just value after damage due to calamity to 130 percent of the square footage before destruction or 2,000 total square feet.

Additionally, for one year after a hurricane makes landfall, the bill prohibits certain counties and municipalities from proposing or adopting a moratorium on the construction or redevelopment of property or more restrictive or burdensome regulations or procedures pertaining to land development. If these provisions are not followed, the bill provides a procedure for a person to file a suit against a local government for declaratory and injunctive relief and entitles a prevailing plaintiff reasonable attorney fees and costs. A county listed in a federal disaster declaration, or a municipality located within such a county, located entirely or partially within 100 miles of a hurricane's track is subject to the prohibition.

For Hurricane Debby, Hurricane Helene, and Hurricane Milton, the bill provides similar prohibitions on construction moratoriums and burdensome or restrictive regulations. The provisions apply until October 1, 2027, and are applied retroactively to August 1, 2024.

The Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) must study the actions of local government after hurricanes which are related to comprehensive plans, land development regulations, and procedures for review, approval, or issuance of site plans, permits, or development orders. The OPPAGA must submit a report to the Legislature by December 1, 2025, which includes recommendations for options to remove impediments to construction,

reconstruction, or redevelopment and prevent local governments from implementing burdensome or restrictive procedures or processes.

The bill also introduces the following policy changes aimed at enhancing the state's emergency preparedness and response efforts:

- Allows Florida National Guard servicemembers to provide medical care within their scope of licensure to military personnel and civilians during emergencies.
- Provides for the tolling and extension of a formal determination of the delineation of the extent of wetlands in the event a state of emergency is declared, which applies retroactively to January 1, 2023.
- Requires a tenant to be given an opportunity to collect his or her belongings or given notice of a date by which the tenant will be able to do so when a rented premise is damaged or destroyed.
- Extends the evacuation clearance time for the Florida Keys Area of Critical State Concern from 24 hours to 24.5 hours and directs the Department of Commerce to conduct a study to determine the number of building permit allocations that may be distributed based on this change. Such building permit allocations may not exceed 900 total allocations and must be distributed over 10 years. The bill also establishes requirements for distribution and issuance of the permits.
- Provides for the regulation of hoisting equipment during hurricanes, requiring equipment to be secured in a specified manner no later than 24 hours before the impacts of a hurricane are anticipated to begin. The Florida Building Commission must establish best practices for the utilization of tower cranes and hoisting equipment on construction job sites during hurricane season and report to the Legislature by December 31, 2026.
- Provides that the estimated costs of a renovation of property damaged by a natural disaster must exceed 75 percent of the fair market value of the building prior to the disaster before the property must be rebuilt to current thermal efficiency standards.
- Requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide special needs shelter registration information to its clients and caregivers.
- Requires the Florida Housing Finance Corporation to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Elder Affairs and with the Agency for Persons with Disabilities to ensure special needs shelter registry information is provided to residents of low-income senior independent living facilities and independent living properties for persons with disabilities that received funding through the corporation.
- Provides that a caregiver of a person with special needs who is eligible for admission to a special needs shelter, and all persons for whom he or she is the caregiver, must be allowed to shelter together in the special needs shelter.

Finally, effective January 1, 2026, the bill requires all state and local government contracts for goods or services related to emergency response entered into, renewed, or amended on or after July 1, 2025, to include a provision that, upon breach during an emergency recovery period, the contractor is required to pay actual, consequential, and liquidated damages and a $5,000 penalty. The bill defines "emergency recovery period" as the 1-year period that begins on the date the Governor initially declared a state of emergency for a natural emergency.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming a law, except as otherwise provided.
Vote: Senate 34-1; House 106-0

Committee on Community Affairs

HB 307 — Bonuses for Employees of Property Appraisers

by Reps. Mayfield, Miller, and others (CS/SB 674 by Rules Committee and Senator Wright)

The bill allows county property appraisers to pay hiring or retention bonuses to employees, provided the expenditure is approved by the Department of Revenue in the county property appraiser's budget.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 111-0

Committee on Community Affairs

CS/CS/SB 384 — Annexing State-owned Lands

by Environment and Natural Resources Committee; Community Affairs Committee; and Senators Burton and Brodeur

The bill amends the procedure for municipal annexation to require a municipality to notify each member of the local legislative delegation prior to the first public hearing on a proposal to annex state-owned lands.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 112-0

Committee on Community Affairs

HB 575 — The Designation of the Gulf of Mexico

by Reps. Sirois, Weinberger, and others (SB 608 by Senator DiCeglie)

The bill (Chapter 2025-8, L.O.F.) renames the Gulf of Mexico as the Gulf of America throughout the Florida Statutes.

These provisions were approved by the Governor and take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 28-9; House 78-27

Committee on Community Affairs

SB 582 — Unlawful Demolition of Historical Buildings and Structures

by Senator Leek

The bill authorizes a code enforcement board or special magistrate to impose fines above the limits specified in statute for the demolition of a structure listed on the National Register of Historic Places or that is a contributing resource to a National Register-listed district.

To impose the fine, the code enforcement board or special magistrate must find, based on competent substantial evidence, that the demolition of the historic structure must have been knowing and willful, not permitted, and not the result of a natural disaster.

The bill limits such fines to no more than 20 percent of the fair or just market valuation of the property before demolition, as determined by the property appraiser.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 34-0; House 115-1

Committee on Community Affairs

CS/CS/HB 669 — Israeli Bonds

by State Affairs Committee; Intergovernmental Affairs Subcommittee; and Rep. Gossett-Seidman and others (CS/SB 1674 by Community Affairs Committee and Senators Calatayud, Fine, and Polsky)

The bill prohibits a local government's investment policy from requiring a minimum bond rating for investments in rated or unrated bonds issued by the Israeli government.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 113-0

Committee on Community Affairs

CS/CS/CS/HB 683 — Construction Regulations

by Commerce Committee; Intergovernmental Affairs Subcommittee; Industries & Professional Activities Subcommittee; and Rep. Griffitts and others (CS/CS/CS/SB 712 by Rules Committee; Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government; Community Affairs Committee; and Senator Grall)

The bill makes the following changes to current law:

- Requires the Department of Environmental Protection to adopt standards for installing synthetic turf, also known as "artificial grass," on residential areas and prohibits local governments from adopting regulations inconsistent with such standards.
- Revises prompt payment provisions for local government construction contracts entered into on or after July 1, 2025, requiring local governments to approve or deny a price quote for a change order from a contractor within 35 days.
- Provides that the state or any political subdivision, when contracting for public works projects, may not penalize a bidder for performing a larger volume of construction work for the state or political subdivision, or reward a bidder for performing a smaller volume of construction work.
- Amends the "private provider" statute to authorize single-trade plans review and require expedited permit processing for such; allow single-trade inspections, as authorized under current law, to be conducted virtually; and authorize single-trade inspections and plans review for solar energy and energy storage installations or alterations.
- Revises the scope of certification for certified alarm system contractors to include surveillance cameras.
- Specifies that only one interior support rail in an elevator must be continuous and at least 42 inches long.
- Exempts from the provisions of the Florida Building Code any system or equipment located on the property of a spaceport which is used for space launch vehicles, payloads, or spacecraft.
- Prohibits local building departments from requiring a copy of a contract between a builder and an owner, or any associated documents, as a requirement to apply for or receive a building permit.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 114-0

Committee on Community Affairs

CS/CS/CS/SB 784 — Platting

by Rules Committee; Judiciary Committee; Community Affairs Committee; and Senator Ingoglia

The bill requires local governments to review, process, and approve plats or replat submittals without action or approval by the governing body through an administrative authority and official designated by ordinance. The administrative authority must be a department, division, or other agency of the local government, and include an administrative officer or employee.

Under the bill, the authority must provide written notice in response to a submittal within seven days acknowledging receipt, identifying any missing documents or information required, and providing information regarding the approval process including requirements and timeframes.

Unless the applicant requests an extension, the authority must approve, approve with conditions, or deny the submittal within the timeframe identified in the initial written notice. A denial must be accompanied by an explanation of why the submittal was denied, specifically citing unmet requirements.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 115-0

Committee on Community Affairs

CS/CS/CS/SB 954 — Certified Recovery Residences

by Rules Committee; Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services; Community Affairs Committee; and Senators Gruters and Rouson

The bill requires local governments to adopt an ordinance by January 1, 2026, and subject to certain restrictions, to formalize and streamline the process for applicants seeking reasonable accommodations from land use regulations in order to open a certified recovery residence. The ordinance must contain a procedure which results in approval or denial within 60 days after receipt of an application, without public hearings beyond the minimum required to grant the requested accommodation.

For certain Level IV certified recovery residences, the bill also eliminates staffing requirements when patients are not present and increases the number of residents that a recovery residence administrator can oversee from 150 to 300 if the operator maintains certain personnel-to-resident ratios when residents are present.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 97-10

Committee on Community Affairs

CS/SB 1080 — Local Government Land Regulation

by Rules Committee and Senator McClain

Zoning Applications and Comprehensive Plan Amendments

The bill requires a local government to specify in writing the minimum information that must be submitted in an application for a zoning approval, rezoning approval, subdivision approval, certification, special exception, or variance. Such information must be available for inspection and copying, posted on the local government's website, and provided to an applicant at a pre-application meeting.

The bill also provides that comprehensive plan amendments not approved at the second public hearing in the plan amendment adoption process must be approved within 180 days thereafter to avoid being deemed withdrawn.

Timeframes for Processing Development Permits and Orders

The bill establishes timeframes for which counties and cities must process applications for development permits and orders. Within five business days after receiving an application for the approval of a development permit or order, the local government must confirm receipt of the application to the applicant. Within 30 days of receiving an application, the local government must either notify the applicant in writing that the application is complete or specify any areas that are deficient. The local government must approve, approve with conditions, or deny the application within 120 days of deeming the application complete, or 180 days if the application requires a quasi-judicial or public hearing.

Additionally, the bill requires the local government to issue specified refund amounts to applicants for failing to meet the prescribed timeframes in the bill.

Impact Fees and Building Code Fees

Current law provides limitations on impact fee increases imposed by local governments, requiring an increase to be phased-in over specified time periods depending on the rate of the increase. However, the phase-in limitations do not apply if the local government completes a study justifying the increase and demonstrating *extraordinary circumstances* necessitating the need to exceed the limitations, holds two public hearings, and receives approval by at least a two-thirds vote of the governing body. The bill prohibits a local government from increasing impact fees using *extraordinary circumstances* methodology if the local government has not increased the impact fee within the past 5 years. The bill increases the vote threshold to a unanimous vote of the governing body and requires such increase to be implemented in at least two but not more than four equal annual increments. These provisions take effect on January 1, 2026.

The bill also provides that alternative fees to school district impact fees must meet certain concurrency tests in order to be collected, charged, or imposed; and expands the use of revenue from building code fees and fines to also be used for carrying out processes and enforcement related to obtaining or finalizing building permits.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect October 1, 2025, except as otherwise provided.
Vote: Senate 29-8; House 84-29

Committee on Community Affairs

CS/HB 1137 — Utility Service Restrictions

by Commerce Committee and Rep. Shoaf (CS/SB 1002 by Rules Committee and Senator Truenow)

The bill adds "board, agency, commission, or authority of any county, municipal corporation, or political subdivision" to the list of entities that are expressly preempted from prohibiting certain types or fuel sources of energy production or the use of appliances that use these specified types or fuel sources of energy production.

The bill also prohibits rural electric cooperatives from taking certain actions that restrict or prohibit the types or fuel sources of energy production or the use of appliances that use these specified types or fuel sources of energy production.

Under the bill, the Florida Building Commission and the State Fire Marshal may not adopt any provision into the Florida Building Code or Florida Fire Prevention Code that prohibits or requires the installation of materials to facilitate the use of more than one type or fuel source of energy production used, delivered, converted, or supplied by the specified utilities and other entities, except to the extent required for the proper operation of an appliance as specified by the appliance manufacturer.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 109-5

Committee on Community Affairs

CS/SB 1202 — Benefits for Firefighters Injured During Training Exercises

by Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee and Senator McClain

The bill expands employer-paid health insurance benefits to a firefighter injured during an official training exercise in which the firefighter became totally and permanently disabled. The coverage includes the injured firefighter and his or her spouse and dependent children. Current law extends this benefit only when an injury is sustained during an on-duty response and does not include injuries sustained during official training exercises.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 116-0

Committee on Community Affairs

CS/CS/SB 1730 — Affordable Housing

by Rules Committee; Community Affairs Committee; and Senator Calatayud

The bill amends various provisions of the Live Local Act, passed during the 2023 Regular Session, related to the preemption of certain zoning and land use regulations to authorize affordable housing developments. Specifically, the bill:

- Clarifies the application of the zoning preemption by defining "commercial," "industrial," and "mixed-use," and providing that the preemption applies in areas such as planned unit developments with different zoning;
- Prohibits local governments from requiring transfer of density or development units or amendments to developments of regional impact before allowing development;
- Prohibits local governments from requiring a certain amount of residential usage in mixed-use developments;
- Clarifies the nature of administrative approval of affordable housing developments;
- Defines a "story" for purposes of municipalities located in an area of critical state concern;
- Allows local governments to restrict height and regulate architectural design for developments in historic districts for structures listed in the National Register for Historic Places before January 1, 2020;
- Requires local governments to administratively approve the demolition of an existing structure associated with a proposed development;
- Requires local governments to reduce parking requirements by 15 percent, as opposed to "considering" such reduction, as provided in current law;
- Provides for priority docketing and prevailing party attorneys' fees and costs, up to $250,000, in lawsuits brought under the Live Local Act;
- Authorizes a local government to include an adjacent parcel of land to be included in a project authorized under the Live Local Act;
- Provides that the Live Local Act does not apply in the Wekiva Study Area or Everglades Protection Area;
- Prohibits local governments from enforcing building moratoria that would have the effect of delaying the permitting or construction of affordable housing developments, except in certain circumstances, and authorizes civil action for violation of this prohibition, including award of prevailing party attorneys' fees and costs up to $250,000; and
- Requires annual reporting beginning November 1, 2026, of litigation related to and projects proposed or approved under the Live Local Act.

The bill provides that an applicant in the process of utilizing the Live Local Act prior to the amendments may opt to utilize the law as it existed upon their initial application.

Outside of the Live Local Act, the bill also authorizes local governments to approve affordable housing development on land owned by a religious institution containing a house of worship regardless of underlying zoning.

The bill enacts a state policy related to support public sector, health care facility, and hospital employer-sponsored housing to meet a federal requirement related to tax-advantaged funding.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 105-0

Committee on Community Affairs

SB 7004 — OGSR/Applicants or Participants in Certain Federal, State, or Local Housing Assistance Programs

by Community Affairs Committee

The bill saves from repeal the public records exemption for applicants or participants in disaster-related housing assistance programs. Under current law, property photographs and personal identifying information of applicants or participants in federal, state, or local disaster housing assistance programs is confidential and exempt from public records inspection and copying requirements. The exemption applies to records held by the Department of Commerce, the Florida Housing Finance Corporation, a county, a municipality, or a local housing finance agency.

The exemption is subject to the Open Government Sunset Review Act and will repeal on October 2, 2025, unless saved from repeal by the Legislature. The bill removes the scheduled repeal, thereby maintaining the confidential and exempt status of information of applicants or participants in certain disaster housing assistance programs.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect October 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-1; House 115-0

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/CS/HB 113 — Fleeing or Attempting to Elude a Law Enforcement Officer

by Judiciary Committee; Criminal Justice Subcommittee; and Rep. Chamberlin and others (CS/SB 468 by Criminal Justice Committee and Senator Collins)

The bill amends s. 316.1935, F.S., to remove the requirement that a law enforcement vehicle prominently display agency insignia for the crime of fleeing or attempting to elude a law enforcement officer.

The bill amends s. 921.0022, F.S., to increase the ranking for specified fleeing or attempting to elude offenses in the offense severity ranking chart (OSRC) of the Criminal Punishment Code.

The second degree felony offense of driving at a high speed with wanton disregard for safety while fleeing or attempting to elude a law enforcement officer who is in a patrol vehicle with siren and lights activated is increased from a level 4 to a level 5 in the OSRC.

The second degree felony of aggravated fleeing or eluding is increased from a level 5 to a level 6 in the OSRC.

The bill amends s 921.0024, F.S., to create a sentencing multiplier certain fleeing or attempting to elude offenses. If the primary offense is fleeing or attempting to elude a law enforcement officer or aggravated fleeing or eluding in violation of s. 316.1935, F.S., and in the offender's prior record there is one or more violations of s. 316.1935, F.S., the subtotal sentence points are multiplied by 1.5.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect October 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 101-9

Committee on Criminal Justice

SB 130 — Compensation of Victims of Wrongful Incarceration

by Senator Bradley

The bill amends s. 961.03, F.S., to:

- Prospectively extend the filing deadline for a petition under the Victims of Wrongful Incarceration Compensation Act (Act) from 90 days to within two years after an order vacating a conviction and sentence becomes final and the criminal charges against a person are dismissed or the person is retried and acquitted, if the person's conviction and sentence is vacated on or after July 1, 2025.
- Retroactively authorize a person to file a petition for determination of status as a wrongfully incarcerated person and determination of eligibility for compensation by July 1, 2027, under specified circumstances.
- Provide that a deceased person's heirs, successors, or assigns do not have standing to file a petition on the deceased person's behalf.

Section 961.04, F.S., is amended to remove the bar to compensation for a petitioner who has been convicted of a violent felony or multiple nonviolent felonies before or during his or her wrongful conviction and incarceration. A person continues to be ineligible for compensation for any period of wrongful incarceration during which the person was serving a concurrent sentence for which he or she was not wrongfully incarcerated.

Section 961.06, F.S., is amended to prohibit the Chief Financial Officer from drawing a warrant to purchase an annuity to pay a claimant for his or her wrongful incarceration if the claimant is currently incarcerated under specified circumstances. The bill also provides for reimbursement arrangements for the state under circumstances relating to the claimant and any successful civil litigation in which he or she may prevail.

Section 961.07, F.S., is amended to provide that claims filed under the new lookback period created by the bill are subject to specific appropriation. The bill amends the Act by amending s. 961.02, F.S., to remove the definition of "violent felony" since every use of the term is deleted by the bill.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 38-0; House 116-0

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/SB 150 — Abandoning Restrained Dogs During Natural Disasters

by Criminal Justice Committee and Senators Gaetz, Arrington, Garcia, Avila, Davis, and Ingoglia

The bill, which names the act "Trooper's Law," creates a new crime when any person restrains a dog outside during a natural disaster and thereafter abandons the dog. This offense is a third degree felony, punishable by five years in prison, or a fine of not more than $10,000 dollars or both.

"Natural disaster" is defined as a situation in which a hurricane, tropical storm, or tornado warning has been issued for a municipality or a county by the National Weather Service, or in which a municipality or county is under a mandatory or voluntary evacuation order.

"Restraint" is defined as a chain, rope, tether, leash, cable, or other device that attaches an animal to a stationary object or trolley system.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect October 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 39-0; House 109-0

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/CS/SB 168 — Mental Health

by Appropriations Committee; Criminal Justice Committee; and Senators Bradley, Garcia, Albritton, Arrington, Avila, Berman, Bernard, Boyd, Brodeur, Burgess, Burton, Calatayud, Collins, Davis, DiCeglie, Gaetz, Grall, Gruters, Harrell, Hooper, Ingoglia, Jones, Leek, Martin, McClain, Osgood, Passidomo, Pizzo, Polsky, Rodriguez, Rouson, Sharief, Simon, Smith, Truenow, Trumbull, Wright, and Yarborough

The bill, entitled the "Tristin Murphy Act," aims to add alternative pathways to prosecuting defendants with mental illnesses.

The bill amends s. 916.105, F.S., to provide legislative intent that a defendant who is charged with certain felonies, any misdemeanor, or any ordinance violation and who has a mental illness, intellectual disability, or autism be evaluated and provided services in a community setting, when this is a feasible alternative to incarceration. Additionally, it is the intent of the legislature to provide law enforcement officers with crisis intervention team training.

Misdemeanor and Felony Diversion

The bill creates ss. 916.135, and 916.136, F.S., to provide model processes for misdemeanor and pretrial felony mental health diversion programs. The bill provides the process for screening a defendant to determine if there is an indication of a mental illness and diverting certain defendants to treatment. Defendants must consent to treatment and participation in the diversion program. A defendant may be released on his or her own recognizance on the condition that all treatment recommendations must be followed, and upon successful completion of all recommendations, the state attorney must consider the dismissal of the defendant's charges and may refer the case to another mental health court if the dismissal of charges is deemed inappropriate.

The bill expands programs and diversion initiatives supported by the Criminal Justice, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse Reinvestment Grant Program to include veterans' treatment court programs, specialized training for 911 public safety telecommunicators and emergency medical technicians, and specialized responses by crisis intervention teams. The bill provides an exception from providing matching local funds for fiscally constrained counties. A community desiring to establish a misdemeanor or felony mental health diversion program is encouraged to apply for such grants. A community that receives grant funds to create a misdemeanor mental health diversion program must follow the model program created in the bill, but the model program may be modified to meet the community's specific needs.

Additional Mental Health Provisions

The bill amends s. 916.185, F.S., to authorize the Department of Children and Families to implement a Forensic Hospital Diversion Pilot Program modeled after the Miami-Dade Forensic Alternative Center in Hillsborough County, in conjunction with the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit in Hillsborough County.

The bill requires the Department of Corrections (DOC) to evaluate and document, at a minimum, the physical and mental health of each inmate eligible for a work assignment or correctional work program. The bill allows the DOC to use discretion in determining the appropriate work assignment for each inmate.

The bill requires a defendant who was adjudicated incompetent to proceed due to a mental illness and later regained competency, and who is sentenced to probation, to have a mental health evaluation and follow recommendations as a condition of such probation.

The Florida Behavioral Health Care Data Repository

The bill creates the Florida Behavioral Health Care Data Repository (data repository) within the Northwest Regional Data Center (NWRDC). The data repository will collect and analyze existing statewide data related to behavioral health care in the state, and develop useful analytics, metrics and visual representations of such analytics and metrics. This data analysis results are intended to:

- Better understand the scope and trends in behavioral health services, spending, and outcomes to improve patient care and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of behavioral health services.
- Better understand the scope of, trends in, and relationship between behavioral health, criminal justice, incarceration, and the use of behavioral health services as a diversion from incarceration for individuals with mental illness.
- Enhance the collection and coordination of treatment and outcome information as an ongoing evidence base for research and education related to behavioral health.

The bill requires the NWRDC to collaborate with the Data Analysis Committee of the Commission on Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder, and relevant stakeholders to develop and submit an implementation plan and proposed budget for the data repository to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by December 1, 2025. Additionally, the NWRDC must submit an annual report on the trends and issues the repository has identified to the same principles beginning July 1, 2026.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect October 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 99-0

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/CS/HB 181 — Parole

by Judiciary Committee; Criminal Justice Subcommittee; and Reps. Hart, Barnaby, and others (CS/SB 964 by Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice and Senator Bernard)

The bill requires the Florida Commission on Offender Review (Commission) to provide a statistical analysis of commission actions to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives upon annual review of the objective parole guidelines.

The Florida Department of Corrections must provide the Commission with information regarding an inmate's use of vocational training, substance abuse treatment, and educational and other self-betterment programs. Further the bill requires the Commission to review such information when determining whether to modify an inmate's presumptive parole release date.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 112-0

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/HB 255 — Aggravated Animal Cruelty

by Criminal Justice Subcommittee and Reps. Chaney and Weinberger (CS/SB 494 Criminal Justice Committee and Senators Leek, Arrington, and Rodriguez)

Beginning January 1, 2026, the bill requires the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) post on its website the names of those persons who have been convicted of, or who have entered a plea of guilty or nolo contendere to, regardless of adjudication, a violation of s. 828.12, F.S., relating to animal cruelty. The information posted on the FDLE's website must be in a searchable format.

The bill amends the Florida Criminal Code Worksheet, to create a sentencing point multiplier for the crime of aggravated animal cruelty. If the primary offense the defendant is convicted of is aggravated animal cruelty, which includes the knowing and intentional torture or torment of an animal that injured, mutilated, or killed the animal, the defendant's subtotal sentence points are multiplied by 1.25.

The bill may be cited as "Dexter's Law."

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 112-0

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/CS/HB 279 — False Reporting

by Judiciary Committee; Criminal Justice Subcommittee; and Rep. Partington and others (SB 726 by Senators Ingoglia and Wright)

The bill amends s. 365.172, F.S., to provide it is a first degree misdemeanor for a person to cause another party to access the 911 system for the purpose of making a false alarm, false complaint or reporting false information.

The bill creates a:

- Third degree felony for misuse of the 911 system if a person suffers great bodily harm, permanent disfigurement, or permanent disability as a proximate result of the misuse; and
- Second degree felony for misuse of the 911 system if a person dies as a proximate result of lawful conduct arising out of the emergency response.

The bill reduces the number of prior convictions needed to subject a person to an enhanced penalty of a third degree felony for misuse of the 911 system from four convictions to two convictions.

The bill deletes an enhanced penalty for misusing the 911 system and receiving services of more than $100 dollars.

A court must order a person convicted of misusing the 911 system or making a false report to law enforcement to pay:

- The costs of prosecution and investigation; and
- Restitution to any victim who suffers damage or injury as a proximate result of lawful conduct arising out of an emergency or law enforcement response.

A defendant must also pay full restitution to a responding public safety agency for any cost incurred by responding to the incident.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 38-0; House 115-0

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/CS/CS/HB 289 — Boating Safety

by Judiciary Committee; State Affairs Committee; Criminal Justice Subcommittee; and Reps. Oliver, Lopez, V., and others (CS/CS/SB 628 by Transportation Committee; Criminal Justice Committee; and Senator Martin)

This act may be cited as "Lucy's Law," and makes revisions to relating to boating, and revises and increases penalties for boating crimes, to more closely mirror similar crimes committed in vehicles.

Crimes Related to Boating

The bill amends s. 327.30, F.S., to create a penalty scheme for leaving the scene of a vessel accident. A person who unlawfully leaves the scene of a vessel accident that results in:

- Property damage only, commits a second degree misdemeanor.
- Injury to a person other than serious bodily injury, commits a third degree felony.
- Serious bodily injury, commits a second degree felony.
- The death of another person or an unborn child, commits a first degree felony and must be sentenced to a mandatory minimum term of imprisonment of 4 years.

The bill amends s. 327.33, F.S., to create a penalty scheme for reckless boating. A person who commits reckless boating and the violation:

- Does not result in an accident, the person commits a second degree misdemeanor.
- Results in an accident that causes damage to the property or person of another, the person commits a first degree misdemeanor.
- Results in an accident that causes serious bodily injury, the person commits a third degree felony.

The bill specifies a person who commits boating under the influence (BUI) that results in the death of an unborn child commits BUI manslaughter and must be sentenced to a mandatory minimum term of imprisonment of 4 years.

The bill provides that the death of an unborn child caused by injury to the mother, by the operation of a vessel by another in a reckless manner likely to cause the death of, or great bodily harm to, another, is vessel homicide.

The bill creates a second degree misdemeanor for a person who gives information in oral, electronic, or written reports as required in ch. 327, F.S., knowing or having reason to believe that such information is false.

Boating Education

The bill amends s. 327.395, F.S., to specify that the rules adopted by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) must establish minimum standards for online boating safety

education course offered, including curriculum requirements, assessment methods, and provider qualifications. The standards must, at a minimum, align with the education standards set by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators and may include additional requirements as necessary to promote effective and accessible online boating safety education in this state. All online course providers must be approved by the FWC and demonstrate compliance with the standards prescribed by the FWC rule before offering courses to the public.

The bill amends s. 327.731, F.S., to revise the mandatory education for certain boating infractions to require a convicted person to:

- Enroll in, attend, and successfully complete a boating safety course;
- File with the FWC within 90 days proof of successful completion of the course; and
- Refrain from operating a vessel until she or she has filed proof of successful completion.

In addition to the penalties above, any person convicted of any criminal violation relating to boating, convicted in any non criminal infraction that resulted in a reportable boating accident, or convicted of two or more specified noncriminal infractions occurring within a 12 month period must also pay a fine of $500.

The bill revises the definition of "Livery vessel," to mean a vessel leased or rented, and the definition of "livery," to specify that a livery does not require the lessee or renter to provide as a condition of the rental or lease agreement a person licensed by the United States Coast Guard to serve as a master of the vessel.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 31-0; House 93-1

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/CS/HB 383 — Purchase and Possession of Firearms by Law Enforcement Officers, Correctional Officers, Correctional Probation Officers, and Servicemembers

by Judiciary Committee; Criminal Justice Subcommittee; and Reps. Holcomb, Giallombardo, and others (CS/SB 490 by Criminal Justice Committee and Senator Collins)

The bill amends s. 790.052(1), F.S., to add correctional probation officers to the list of persons who, if they hold active certification from the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission (CJSTC), have the right to carry concealed firearms during off-duty hours at the discretion of their superior officers, and may perform their normal law enforcement functions, using their weapons in a manner which is reasonably expected of on-duty officers in similar situations.

Additionally, the bill provides that a person holding an active certification from the CJSTC as a correctional probation officer meets the definition of "qualified law enforcement officer," and the definition of "qualified retired law enforcement officer."

Section 790.052, F.S., does not limit the authority of the Department of Corrections (DOC) to establish policies limiting correctional probation officers from carrying concealed firearms during off-duty hours in their capacity as employees of the DOC.

If the superior officer of the DOC directs the officers under his or her supervision to carry concealed firearms while off duty, he or she must file a statement with the governing body containing instructions and requirements relating to the carrying of said firearms.

The bill exempts law enforcement officers, correctional officers, correctional probation officers, and servicemembers from the mandatory 3 day waiting period between the purchase and delivery of a firearm by defining "holder of a concealed weapons or concealed firearms license," to include a:

- Person who holds a valid license issued under s. 790.06., F.S.;
- Law enforcement officer, a correctional officer, or a correctional probation officer, as those terms are defined in s. 943.10, F.S.; and
- Servicemember as defined in s. 250.01, F.S.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 33-3; House 111-0

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/HB 421 — Peer Support for First Responders

by Criminal Justice Subcommittee and Rep. Maggard and others (CS/SB 86 by Criminal Justice Committee and Senators Burgess and Collins)

The bill (Chapter 2025-9, L.O.F.) amends s. 111.09, F.S., relating to peer support for first responders, to revise the definition of "first responder," to include support personnel as defined in s. 943.10(11), F.S., who are involved in investigating a crime scene or collecting or processing evidence.

Section 943.10(11), F.S., provides that "support personnel" means any person employed or appointed by an employing agency who is not an officer or, as specified by the commission, other professional employee in the criminal justice system.

Under the bill, such support personnel are eligible to receive peer support and the confidentiality of communications made while participating in peer support.

These provisions were approved by the Governor and take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 113-0

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/CS/HB 437 — Tampering with an Electronic Monitoring Device

by Judiciary Committee; Criminal Justice Subcommittee; and Rep. Daley (SB 1054 by Senators Garica and Avila)

The bill amends the crime of tampering with an electronic device to include a person who *affirmatively acts to*, or requests, authorizes, or solicits a person to *affirmatively act to* circumvent the operation of an electronic monitoring device required to be worn or used pursuant to a court order or pursuant to an order by the Florida Commission on Offender Review.

The bill reclassifies the penalty for tampering with an electronic monitoring device. If a person is charged with or serving a sentence for a:

- Misdemeanor or third degree felony, tampering with an electronic monitoring device is a third degree felony;
- Second degree felony, tampering with an electronic monitoring device is a second degree felony;
- First degree felony, first degree felony punishable by a term of years not exceeding life, a life felony, or a capital felony, tampering with an electronic monitoring device is a first degree felony.

A person under 18 years of age who tampers with an electronic monitoring device commits a third degree felony, regardless of the level of the underlying offense.

The court must revoke pretrial release for a person who commits the crime of tampering with an electronic monitoring device. The court may set a new bond with conditions of release upon making a written finding that sufficient conditions of release exist to reasonably protect the community from risk of physical harm, ensure the presence of the accused at trial or at other proceedings, and assure the integrity of the judicial process.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect October 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 110-1

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/SB 472 — Education in Correctional Facilities for Professional Licensure

by Fiscal Policy Committee and Senator Truenow

The bill amends the Correctional Education Program to require the Department of Corrections (DOC) to design and implement a plan to ensure that inmates who successfully complete classes that meet the necessary curriculum for professional licensure receive credit towards the applicable Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) licensure requirements. The DOC must coordinate with the relevant professional boards under the DBPR, or the DBPR when there is no board, to develop such a plan.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 115-0

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/SB 612 — Unlawful Distribution of Controlled Substances Resulting in Death

by Criminal Justice Committee and Senator Burgess

The bill creates a new crime of third degree murder for the unlawful killing of a human being when:

- A person under 18 years old distributes any substance or mixture that he or she knew or reasonably should have known contained dangerous fentanyl or fentanyl analogs; and
- Such substance or mixture is proven to have caused or proven to have been a substantial factor in producing the death of the user.

This new third degree murder offense is a second degree felony.

"Dangerous fentanyl or fentanyl analogs" includes:

- Alfentanil.
- Carfentanil.
- Fentanyl.
- Sufentanil.
- A fentanyl derivative.
- A controlled substance analog of any of the above listed substances.
- A mixture containing any of the above listed substances.

The term "distribute" means to deliver, other than by administering or dispensing, a controlled substance.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 31-5; House 113-1

Committee on Criminal Justice

HB 653 — Aggravating Factors for Capital Felonies

by Reps. Holcomb, Nix, and Fabricio (SB 776 by Senator Ingoglia)

The bill creates an additional aggravating factor for the jury and the sentencing court to consider in determining whether a defendant who has been convicted of a capital felony is eligible to receive a death sentence and whether to recommend a sentence of death or life imprisonment.

The new aggravating factor allows the jury to consider whether the capital felony was committed against the head of a state, including but not limited to, the President or the Vice President of the United States or the Governor of this or another state, or if in an attempt to commit such crime the defendant committed a capital felony against another individual.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 25-12; House 99-13

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/HB 687 — Driving and Boating Offenses

by Criminal Justice Subcommittee and Reps. Kendall, Plakon, and others (CS/CS/SB 138 by Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice; Criminal Justice Committee; and Senator Wright)

The bill makes multiple changes to strengthen and enhance crimes related to driving and boating offenses and may be cited as "Trenton's Law."

The bill increases the penalty for the following convictions from a second degree felony to a first degree felony when a person who is convicted of:

- DUI manslaughter, and has a previous conviction for DUI manslaughter, vehicular homicide, BUI manslaughter or vessel homicide.
- BUI manslaughter, and has a previous conviction for DUI manslaughter, vehicular homicide, BUI manslaughter or vessel homicide.
- Vehicular homicide, and has a previous conviction for DUI manslaughter, vehicular homicide, BUI manslaughter or vessel homicide.
- Vessel homicide, and has a previous conviction for DUI manslaughter, vehicular homicide, BUI manslaughter or vessel homicide.

The bill amends provisions relating to a refusal to submit to a breath or urine test after an arrest for DUI. A first refusal to submit to a lawful test of breath or urine subsequent to a DUI arrest is a second degree misdemeanor, and a second or subsequent refusal is a first degree misdemeanor.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect October 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 111-0

Committee on Criminal Justice

HB 693 — Aggravating Factors for Capital Felonies

by Rep. Redondo and others (SB 984 by Senator Gruters)

The bill creates an additional aggravating factor for the jury and the sentencing court to consider in determining whether a defendant who has been convicted of a capital felony is eligible to receive a death sentence and whether to recommend a sentence of death or life imprisonment.

The new aggravating factor allows a jury to consider whether the victim of the capital felony was gathered with one or more people for a school activity, religious activity, or a public government meeting when he or she was killed.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect October 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 32-5; House 96-10

Committee on Criminal Justice

HB 711 — Spectrum Alert

by Reps. Borrero, Campbell, and others (CS/CS/SB 500 by Fiscal Policy Committee; Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice; and Senators Avila and Arrington)

The bill creates s. 937.0401, F.S., to establish and implement the "Spectrum Alert," to create a standardized system to aid in the search for a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). By July 1, 2026, the Department of Law Enforcement, in cooperation with the Department of Transportation, the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, the Department of the Lottery and local law enforcement agencies must establish and implement the spectrum alert to enhance the safety and well-being of children with ASD through immediate effective community response.

The bill also requires those agencies, by July 1, 2026, to:

- Develop a training program and alert system for missing children with ASD which is compatible with existing alert systems. The training program must implement crisis intervention team training to equip law enforcement officers with the skills to understand ASD and other mental illnesses, to de-escalate interactions with children in crisis, to facilitate appropriate interventions, and to respond effectively to a reported missing child emergency when the child has ASD.
- Establish policies and procedures for responding to a reported missing child emergency when the child has ASD. The bill specifies the policies and procedures must include, at minimum, all of the following:
  - Immediate and widespread dissemination of critical information when a child with ASD is reported missing.
  - Enhancement of emergency response team's competence by informing them of the unique behaviors and needs of children with ASD.
  - Measures to increase public awareness and understanding of the risks associated with autism-related elopement, to foster community support for children with ASD.
- Require a law enforcement agency, when receiving such a report, to do, at minimum, the following:
  - Contact media outlets in the affected area or surrounding jurisdictions.
  - Inform all on-duty law enforcement officers of the reported missing child with ASD.
  - Communicate the report to all other law enforcement agencies in the surrounding counties in which the report was filed.

The bill appropriates $190,000 in nonrecurring funds from the Operating Trust Fund within the Department of Law Enforcement for the department to implement the Spectrum Alert.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 99-0

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/CS/HB 757 — Sexual Images

by Judiciary Committee; Criminal Justice Subcommittee; and Reps. Redondo, Kincart Jonsson, and others (CS/CS/CS/SB 1180 by Fiscal Policy Committee; Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice; Criminal Justice Committee; and Senator Gaetz)

The bill creates s. 800.045, F.S., to create offenses relating to lewd or lascivious images. "Lewd or lascivious image," means:

- Any image depicting lewd or lascivious exhibition in violation of s. 800.04(7), F.S.
- Any image that has been created, altered, adapted, or modified by electronic, mechanical, or other means, to portray lewd or lascivious exhibition in violation of s. 800.04(7), F.S., committed in the presence of an identifiable minor.

It is a second degree felony for any person to possess with the intent to promote any photograph, motion picture, exhibition, show, representation, or other presentation which, in whole or in part includes a lewd or lascivious image. The possession of three or more copies of such photograph, etc., is prima facie evidence of an intent to promote.

It is a third degree felony for any person to knowingly solicit, possess, control, or intentionally view a photograph, motion picture, exhibition, show, representation, image, data, computer depiction, or other presentation which, in whole or in part, he or she knows to include a lewd or lascivious image.

The solicitation, possession, control, or intentional viewing of each such photograph, etc., is a separate offense. If such photograph, etc., includes a lewd or lascivious image depicting more than one minor, each such minor in each such photograph, etc., that is knowingly solicited, possessed, controlled, or intentionally viewed is a separate offense.

The bill amends s. 827.071, F.S., to provide that "actual or simulated lewd exhibition of the genitals" may be evidenced by the overall content of an image, taking into account the age of the minor depicted and including, but not limited to, whether:

- The focal point of the image is on the minor's genitalia;
- The setting of the image is sexually suggestive or in a place or pose generally associated with sexual conduct;
- The minor is depicted in an unnatural pose, or in inappropriate attire, considering the age of the minor;
- The image suggests sexual coyness or a willingness to engage in sexual conduct; or
- The image is intended or designed to elicit a sexual response in the viewer.

Additionally, the bill adds "solicit" to the crime of knowingly possessing, controlling, or intentionally viewing child pornography. Under the bill, the knowing solicitation of child pornography is a third degree felony.

The bill amends s. 836.13, F.S., to provide that it is a third degree felony for:

- A person to willfully generate any altered sexual depiction of an identifiable person, without the consent of the identifiable person.
- A person to solicit any altered sexual depiction of an identifiable person, without the consent of the identifiable person, and who knows or reasonably should have known that such visual depiction was an altered sexual depiction.
- A person to willfully possess with the intent to maliciously promote, any altered sexual depiction of an identifiable person, without the consent of the identifiable person, and who knows or reasonably should have known that such visual depiction was an altered sexual depiction.

The bill authorizes an aggrieved person to initiate a civil cause of action against a person who commits the above described crimes in s. 836.13, F.S., to obtain appropriate relief.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect October 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 115-0

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/HB 777 — Offenses Involving Children

by Judiciary Committee and Rep. Plakon and others (CS/CS/SB 1136 by Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice; Criminal Justice Committee; and Senator Collins)

The bill prohibits certain age-related defenses from being raised in a prosecution for any offense related to kidnapping, false imprisonment, luring or enticing a child, interference with custody, removing minors from the state or concealing minors, contrary to state agency order or court order, human trafficking, or human smuggling, when the victim's age is an element of the offense. Ignorance of the victims age, misrepresentation of a victim's age by any person or a bona fide belief that a victim is over a specified age is also not a defense. However, the bill provides an exception for s. 787.30, F.S., relating to employment of persons in adult entertainment establishments.

The bill increases the age of a victim involved in luring or enticing offenses from 12 to 14 years of age.

The bill also increases the penalties for a person 18 years of age or older who intentionally lures or entices, or attempts to lure or entice, a child under the age of 14 into or out of a structure, dwelling, or conveyance for an unlawful purpose, from:

- A first degree misdemeanor to a third degree felony.
- A third degree felony to a second degree felony for a second or subsequent offense.
- A third degree felony to a second degree felony, if the offender has been previously convicted of a violation of ch. 794, F.S., relating to sexual battery, s. 800.04, F.S., relating to lewd or lascivious offenses committed on or in the presence of persons less than 16 years of age or s. 847.0135(5), F.S., relating to lewd or lascivious exhibition using a computer, or a violation of a similar law of another jurisdiction.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect October 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 111-0

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/HB 847 — Expedited DNA Testing Grant Program

by Criminal Justice Subcommittee and Rep. Johnson and others (CS/SB 1072 by Fiscal Policy Committee and Senator McClain)

The bill creates the Expedited DNA Testing Grant Program within the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) to award grants to law enforcement agencies for the processing of evidentiary items for DNA testing at private laboratories.

A private laboratory is defined as any DNA laboratory accredited for a minimum of five years pursuant to ISO/IEC 17025:2017 of the International Organization for Standardization and FBI Quality Assurance Standards.

The bill requires the FDLE to annually award any funds specifically appropriated for the grant program to law enforcement agencies to cover testing of DNA samples by specified private laboratories when:

- The technology or technique needed to properly test the evidence or DNA sample is not readily available at a local or state laboratory; or
- When expedited testing of the DNA sample is in the best interest of advancing an investigation.

An agency receiving grant funds must submit a report to the executive director of the FDLE no later than one year after receiving grant funding, including the:

- Amount of annual funding received from this grant.
- Number of cases tested by the private laboratory.
- Type of DNA testing used, including the name of the private laboratory to which such testing was outsourced and the type of primary equipment used by the private laboratory for such testing.
- Lab report with the results of the DNA testing.
- The average amount of time it took to complete the DNA testing.

The FDLE may adopt rules to implement and administer the grant program. Grant awards to support the program are subject to appropriation.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 114-0

Committee on Criminal Justice

SB 878 — Probation for Misdemeanor Offenses

by Senator Martin

The bill allows the court to sentence a defendant who is found guilty of any misdemeanor to a term of probation for up to one year, if the court finds that a controlled substance, a controlled substance analog, or a chemical substance was a significant factor in the commission of the crime.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-1; House 115-0

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/CS/HB 903 — Corrections

by Judiciary Committee; Criminal Justice Subcommittee; and Rep. Jacques and others (CS/CS/SB 1604 by Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice; Criminal Justice Committee; and Senator Martin)

The bill amends various sections of law to implement changes to the Department of Corrections (DOC), including, but not limited to, restructuring the Corrections Mental Health Act, revising requirements for inmates who file lawsuits, and providing for mandatory consecutive terms of imprisonment for specified crimes.

Corrections Mental Health Act and Emergency Treatment

The bill amends the Corrections Mental Health Act to streamline the process for the involuntary placement and involuntary treatment of inmates who have a mental illness by creating a process for treatment of certain inmates and a process for inmates to establish an advance directive. Specifically, the bill:

- Amends and substantially rewords the Corrections Mental Health Act under ss. 945.41- 945.49, F.S., to provide updated, clarifying, or technical language, as well as provide substantial changes to the procedure for placement and treatment of inmates;
- Provides legislative intent and procedures for inmates engaging in self-injurious behavior;
- Authorizes a warden to directly petition the circuit court for an order compelling an inmate to submit to emergency surgical intervention or other medical services when an inmate is competent, engaging in self-injurious behavior, and refusing necessary treatment;
- Establishes inmate health care advance directives and creates a DOC ombudsman to serve as a proxy for an inmate without an advance directive;
- Authorizes the employees of the DOC to use of force in specified situations to effectuate the emergency treatment of an inmate and provides immunity from liability for such employees; and
- Outlines procedures to determine the capacity of an inmate.

Inmate Lawsuits

The bill makes various changes relating to inmate litigation. Specifically, the bill:

- Restricts a prisoner from pursuing civil action until all administrative remedies are fully exhausted to align with the Prison Litigation Reform Act which restricts a prisoner, or person on behalf of a prisoner, from filing a lawsuit relating to the conditions of confinement for a mental or emotional injury suffered while in custody without a prior showing of physical injury or the commission of a sexual act;
- Provides a one year statute of limitations for all petitions, extraordinary writs, tort actions, or other actions concerning any condition of confinement of a prisoner; and

- Specifies the deferral of prepayment of court costs and fees does not apply to challenges to prison disciplinary reports.

Crime

The bill provides exceptions to the crime of unlawful installation of a tracking device, and mandates consecutive sentences under the 10-20-Life statutes. Specifically, the bill:

- Exempts certain DOC and Department of Juvenile Justice personnel, and persons authorized by a court order from the criminal prohibitions of the installation and use of tracking devices and applications; and
- Clarifies that a court must sentence a person to consecutive mandatory minimum terms of imprisonment if that person is convicted of multiple qualifying crimes under the 10-20-Life statute. However, the court has the discretion to sentence such a person to a consecutive sentence for any crime that is committed at the same time but is not a qualifying crime under the 10-20-Life statute.

Other Provisions

The bill amends various other provisions relating to the death penalty, the DOC contracts, and the Parole Qualifications Committee. Specifically, the bill:

- Authorizes a death sentence to be executed by a method not deemed unconstitutional if the acquisition of chemicals necessary for lethal injection becomes impossible or impractical.
- Authorizes the DOC to exclude certain services from a contract for private correctional services and retain the responsibility for the delivery of such services when it is in the best interest of the state. Additionally, the requirement for each contract to include substantial minority participation is removed.
- Removes language requiring the participation of minority business enterprises.
- Eliminates the use of the Parole Qualifications Committee in the selection process for membership of the Florida Commission on Offender Review (FCOR) and allows the members to be directly selected and appointed by the Governor and Cabinet.
- Removes the requirement for the FCOR membership to include representation from minority persons.
- Repeals s. 947.021, F.S., regarding expedited appointments of the FCOR members to be consistent with the elimination of the Parole Qualifications Committee.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 26-11; House 83-33

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/HB 1049 — Tampering With, Harassing, or Retaliating Against Court Officials

by Criminal Justice Subcommittee and Rep. Persons-Mulicka and others (CS/CS/SB 1838 by Fiscal Policy Committee; Criminal Justice Committee; and Senator Martin)

The bill amends the first degree misdemeanor crime relating to threats and harassment to add general magistrates, special magistrates, child support enforcement hearing officers, and administrative assistants, to the list of specified persons that a person may not knowingly and willfully:

- Threaten with death or serious bodily harm; or
- Harass with intent to intimidate or coerce the person to perform or refrain from performing his or her lawful duty.

The bill amends the crime of tampering with jurors to instead provide for tampering with or harassing a court official. A person who knowingly commits any of the following acts with the intent to cause or induce any court official to obstruct the administration of justice or affect the outcome of an official investigation or official proceeding commits the crime of tampering with a court official:

- Uses intimidation or physical force;
- Threatens any person or attempts to do so;
- Engages in misleading conduct toward any person; or
- Offers pecuniary benefit or gain to any person.

A person who commits the crime of tampering with a court official commits:

- A third degree felony, if the offense level of the affected official investigation or official proceeding is indeterminable or involves the investigation or prosecution of a misdemeanor or noncriminal matter pending in county court.
- A second degree felony, if the official investigation or official proceeding affected involves the investigation or prosecution of a third degree felony or a noncriminal matter pending in circuit court.
- A first degree felony, if the official investigation or official proceeding affected involves the investigation or prosecution of a second degree felony.
- A first degree felony, punishably by a term of years not exceeding life, if the official investigation or official proceeding affected involves the investigation or prosecution of a first degree felony or a first degree felony punishable by a term of years not exceeding life.
- A life felony, if the official investigation or official proceeding affected involves the investigation or prosecution of a life or capital felony.

A person who intentionally harasses a court official and thereby hinders, delays, prevents, or dissuades, or attempts to hinder, delay, prevent, or dissuade a court official from performing any of the following acts commits the crime of harassing a court official:

- Attending an official proceeding;

- Rendering a fair verdict based solely upon the evidence produced at an official proceeding and the law; or
- Following the rules of juror behavior and deliberation as set forth by the judge.

A person who commits the crime of harassing a court official commits:

- A first degree misdemeanor if the official investigation or official proceeding affected involves the investigation or prosecution of a misdemeanor or noncriminal matter pending in county court.
- A third degree felony, if the offense level of the affected official investigation or official proceeding is indeterminable or involves the investigation or prosecution of a felony of the third degree or any noncriminal matter pending in circuit court.
- A second degree felony, if the official investigation or official proceeding affected involves the investigation or prosecution of a second degree felony.
- A first degree felony, if the official investigation or official proceeding affected involves the investigation or prosecution of a first degree felony.
- A first degree felony punishable by a term of years not exceeding life, if the official investigation or official proceeding affected involves the investigation or prosecution of a first degree felony punishable by a term of years not exceeding life or a prosecution of a life or capital felony.

The bill creates the crime of retaliating against a court official. A person who, with the intent to retaliate against a court official for his or her participation in an official investigation or official proceeding, commits any of the following acts, commits a third degree felony:

- Knowingly engages in any conduct that threatens to cause bodily injury to another person; or
- Damages the tangible property of another person or threatens to do so.

If the crime results in bodily injury, the person commits a second degree felony.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect October 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 113-0

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/CS/HB 1053 — Department of Law Enforcement

by Budget Committee; Criminal Justice Subcommittee; and Rep. Plakon and others (SB 1268 by Senator Simon)

The bill amends various sections of ch. 943, F.S., the Florida Law Enforcement Act. Specifically, the bill:

- Renames the Crimes Against Children Criminal Profiling Program to the Child Exploitation and Crimes Against Children Program, and specifies that the program must perform investigative, intelligence, research, and training activities related to child exploitation.
- Repeals the Florida Violent Crime and Drug Control Council and corresponding implementation account.
- Revises the membership of the Domestic Security Oversight Council and removes the chair as a required voting member.
- Revises the Domestic Security Oversight Council's annual report to include information submitted by the Chief of Domestic Security.
- Requires the Domestic Security Oversight Council's annual report include security enhancements of any building, facility, or structure owned or leased by a state agency, state university, or community college or an entity that has conducted the specified assessments.
- Increases the maximum annual disbursements for veterinary care of retired police dogs from $1,500 to $5,000 per dog.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 114-0

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/CS/CS/HB 1095 — Criminal Offender Substance Abuse Program

by Judiciary Committee; Justice Budget Subcommittee; Criminal Justice Subcommittee; and Rep. Koster and others (CS/CS/SB 1140 by Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice; Criminal Justice Committee; and Senators Gruters and Osgood)

The bill establishes a Substance Abuse Accountability Pilot Program in Hillsborough County from October 1, 2025, to September 30, 2027, and is repealed November 30, 2028.

The bill requires the court to designate a subset of identified persons who are convicted of a felony or first degree misdemeanor, and placed on probation, for which abstaining from alcohol or a controlled substance is a condition of such release. Individuals will be randomly assigned to participate in the program and no more than 150 offenders may participate at any one time. A defendant must be explicitly advised he or she may be randomly assigned to the program, and all terms and conditions must be explained prior to entering any plea agreement that would make such person eligible. A defendant will remain in the program for the same length of time as the term of probation. Upon successful completion of half of the term of participation in the program, the court may terminate the person's probation and participation in the program.

The bill requires the Sheriff of Hillsborough County, in consultation with the Chief Judge of the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit, the State Attorney, and the Department of Corrections, to design and implement the pilot program. The program must include specified elements, and a program coordinator, whose duties must include identifying and hiring personnel to ensure efficient administration of the program.

By June 30, 2028, the Attorney General must complete an evaluation of the program's effectiveness. The Attorney General must determine the metrics to be evaluated and may contract with a third party to conduct any program evaluations. By November 30, 2028, a report on the pilot program, which must include the number of program participants, the number of program violations, and the number of successful program completions, must be delivered to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The bill requires, subject to specific appropriation, any funds awarded to be used for expenses related to establishing and administering the program, including personnel, equipment, training and technical assistance, payments for jail space, data collection, program evaluations, and program fees for indigent participants.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 111-0

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/HB 1099 — Arrest and Detention of Individuals with Significant Medical Conditions

by Criminal Justice Subcommittee and Rep. Canady and others (CS/SB 1450 by Criminal Justice Committee and Senator Burgess)

The bill specifies that a law enforcement officer may use his or her discretion based on the totality of the circumstances when determining whether to make an immediate arrest of a person with a significant medical condition, including an arrest for an offense committed against an elderly person or disabled adult. The bill defines a "person with a significant medical condition" as a person who is a patient or resident of a hospital, nursing home facility or an assisted living facility.

A law enforcement officer may consider all lawful methods to make an arrest of such a person, including seeking an arrest warrant, but does not preclude the officer from making an arrest of such a person without a warrant.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 108-0

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/CS/HB 1121 — Unmanned Aircraft and Unmanned Aircraft Systems

by Judiciary Committee; Criminal Justice Subcommittee; and Rep. Canady and others (CS/CS/SB 1422 by Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice; Criminal Justice Committee; and Senator Truenow)

The bill amends s. 330.41, F.S., to increase the criminal penalties from a second degree misdemeanor to a third degree felony if a person knowingly or willfully:

- Operates a drone over a critical infrastructure facility unless the operation is for a commercial purpose and is authorized by and in compliance with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations;
- Allows a drone to make contact with a critical infrastructure facility including any person or object on the premises of or within the facility; or
- Allows a drone to come within a distance of a critical infrastructure facility that is close enough to interfere with the operations of or cause a disturbance to the facility.

The definition of critical infrastructure facility is amended to include wired communication facilities.

The bill amends s. 330.411, F.S., to specify it is a third degree felony for a person to *knowingly or willfully* possess or operate an unmanned aircraft or unmanned aircraft system with an attached weapon, firearm, explosive, destructive device, or ammunition.

Additionally, for the purpose of violating provisions prohibiting the operation of a drone over critical infrastructure as provided in s. 330.41(4)(a), F.S., it is a third degree felony to knowingly or willfully:

- Alter, manipulate, tamper with, or otherwise change an unmanned aircraft or unmanned aircraft system's hardware or software to purposefully frustrate any tool, system, or technology intended to satisfy the remote identification requirements established by the FAA as they relate to any unmanned aircraft or unmanned aircraft system; or
- Possess or operate such an altered, manipulated, etc., unmanned aircraft or unmanned aircraft system.

The above-described offenses do not apply if a person is authorized by the administrator of the FAA or the Secretary of Defense, or their respective designees, to alter, possess, or operate such an altered unmanned aircraft or unmanned aircraft system.

A person who, without lawful authority, possesses or operates an unmanned aircraft or unmanned aircraft system that carries a weapon of mass destruction, or a hoax weapon of mass destruction, commits a first degree felony.

The bill amends s. 934.50, F.S., to create a first degree misdemeanor if a person operates a drone equipped with an imaging device to record an image of the tenant of privately owned real property, with the intent to conduct surveillance of the individual or property in violation of such

a person's reasonable expectation of privacy. It is a third degree felony if a person knowingly and willfully commits this crime and intentionally distributes surveillance.

These penalties do not apply to a state agency, political subdivision, or law enforcement agency or to an officer, employee, or agent of such subdivision or agency who is acting in the course and scope of his or her employment.

Additionally, a law enforcement agency may use a drone to provide or maintain the public safety of a crowd of 50 people or more, and also in furtherance of providing and maintaining the security of an elected official.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect October 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 114-0

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/SB 1168 — Installation or Use of Tracking Devices or Applications

by Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice and Senator Leek

The bill increases the penalty for unlawfully installing, placing, a tracking device or tracking application on another person's property without consent or using such a device or application to determine a person's location or their property's location or movement without consent from a third degree felony to a second degree felony if a person installs, places, or uses a device or application to commit a dangerous crime or to facilitate the commission of a dangerous crime as defined in s. 907.041(5)(a), F.S.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect October 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 116-0

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/SB 1198 — Fraudulent Use of Gift Cards

by Criminal Justice Committee and Senators DiCeglie and Rodriguez

The bill creates s. 817.091, F.S., relating to the fraudulent use of gift cards. It is a first degree misdemeanor for a person with intent to defraud to:

- Acquire or retain possession of a gift card or of gift card redemption information without consent.
- Alter or tamper with a gift card or its packaging.
- Devise a scheme to obtain a gift card or gift card redemption information under fraudulent pretenses, representations, or promises.
- Use, for the purpose of obtaining money, goods, or services or anything else of value, a gift card or gift card redemption information that has been obtained in any manner described above.

A person commits a third degree felony, if he or she commits the above described offense, and:

- Has a previous conviction of such an offense; or
- The value of any gift card; gift card redemption information; or money, goods, services, or other thing of value obtained as a result of the violation exceeds $750.

Additionally, the bill defines a:

- "Gift card" as a physical or virtual card, code, or device that may be issued to a consumer on a prepaid basis primarily for personal, family, or household purposes in a specified amount, regardless of whether that amount may be increased or reloaded in exchange for payment, and that is redeemable upon presentation by a consumer at a single merchant, a group of affiliated merchants, or a group of unaffiliated merchants.
- "Gift card redemption information" as information unique to each gift card which allows the cardholder to access, transfer, or spend the funds on that gift card.
- "Value" as the greatest amount of economic loss the card issuer, gift card seller, or cardholder might reasonably suffer, including the full or maximum monetary face or load value of the gift card, regardless of whether the gift card has been activated.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect October 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 115-0

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/CS/CS/SB 1344 — Juvenile Justice

by Fiscal Policy Committee; Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice; Criminal Justice Committee; and Senator Simon

The bill amends and repeals numerous sections of ch. 984, F.S., resolves inconsistencies between current practices of the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) and statutory language to more accurately reflect the DJJ's mission. The bill revises, deletes, and adds numerous definitions throughout ch. 984, F.S., and revises, in part, provisions relating to:

- Voluntary and court ordered services to families;
- Petitions for children in need of services;
- Early truancy intervention;
- Hearings for a child in need of services;
- Orders of adjudication; and
- Placement in a shelter.

Chapter 984, F.S., is renamed the Children and Families in Need of Services; Prevention and Intervention for School Truancy and Ungovernable and Runaway Children and revises the purpose of this chapter. Some revisions include providing that the purpose is to provide judicial, nonjudicial, and other procedures to address the status offenses of children who are truant from school, run away from their caregivers, or exhibit ungovernable behavior by refusing to follow the household rules of their caregivers and engage in behavior that places the child at risk of harm. The bill also provides revisions for the temporary placement of the child only when necessary for the child's education, safety, and welfare and other less restrictive alternatives have been exhausted.

Legislative Intent

The bill revises the legislative intent for prevention and intervention to provide:

- Effective services or treatment to address physical, social, and emotional needs;
- Equal opportunity and access to quality and effective education which will meet the individual needs of each child and prepare the child for future employment;
- Access to preventative services to provide the child and family the support of community resources to address the needs of the child and reduce the risk of harm or engaging in delinquent behavior;
- Court intervention when necessary to address at-risk behavior before it escalates into harm to the child or to the community through delinquent behavior;
- Access to representation by a trained advocate for court proceedings; and
- Supervision and services by staff when temporary out of home placement is necessary.

Additionally, the DJJ may develop and implement effective early prevention programs to address truancy and ungovernable and runaway behavior of a child, which place the child at risk of harm, and to allow for intervention before the child engages in a delinquent act.

Children and Families in Need of Services

Services to families are provided on a continuum of increasing intensity and participation by the parent, legal guardian or custodian, and child, and a case manager must be assigned by the designated provider at intake. The case manager must request consent for services and interagency information sharing from the parent, legal guardian, or custodian.

A family is not eligible to receive voluntary family services, if, at the time of the referral, the child is under court-ordered supervision by the DJJ for delinquency, or under court ordered supervision by the Department of Children and Families (DCF). A child who has received a prearrest delinquency citation, or is receiving delinquency diversion services, may receive voluntary family services. If there is a pending investigation into an allegation of abuse, neglect or abandonment, the child may be eligible for voluntary family services if the DCF agrees to the services and makes a referral.

When a child is in need of services the DJJ must file a petition as soon as practicable. The bill removes the 45 day deadline to file such a petition. The DJJ or its service provider must provide an array of voluntary family services aimed toward remediating school truancy, homelessness, and runaway and ungovernable behavior by children.

The DJJ must request a meeting of the family and child with a case staffing committee to review the case of any family or child who is in need of services. A case staffing committee meeting must be convened within 30 days after the case is referred by the court, and must:

- Identify the family's concerns and contributing factors;
- Request the family and child to identify their needs and concerns;
- Seek input from the school district and other persons in attendance with knowledge of the family or child's situation and concerns;
- Consider the voluntary family services or other community services that have been offered and the results of those services;
- Identify whether truancy is a concern and efforts have been made to remedy it; and
- Reach a timely decision to provide the child or family with services and recommend any appropriate treatment through the development of a plan for services.

Additionally, a guardian ad litem may be appointed for specific cases.

Right to Counsel

A child must be represented by counsel if a petition is filed alleging that he or she is in need of services, or if he or she is subject to contempt proceedings. Guidelines for appointing counsel for an indigent child, waiving counsel, or enforcing the nonindigent parents or legal guardian of an indigent child to employ counsel are provided in the bill, including, in part:

- The child must be represented by counsel at each court appearance unless he or she waived the right to counsel. The court must advise the child of his or her right to counsel at every subsequent hearing, if the right to counsel was waived.

- If the parents or legal guardians of a child are not indigent but refuse to employ counsel, the court must appoint counsel to represent the child until the parents provide counsel. Costs of representation must be imposed for such representation.
- A parent or legal guardian of a child ordered to obtain private counsel, who willfully fails to follow the court order may be punished in civil contempt proceedings.
- The court may appoint counsel to represent the child if the child's behavior has persisted after a good faith effort by the parents to participate in services.
- The court may also appoint an attorney to represent a parent or legal guardian upon finding that the parent or legal guardian is indigent.

Hearings for Children and Families in need of Services

An arraignment hearing for the petition of a child in need of services must be within a reasonable time after the date of the filing. At the arraignment hearing the court may:

- Grant a continuance of the hearing for the child or the parent, legal guardian, or custodian to obtain an attorney and legal counsel requests a continuance.
- Treat failure of a noticed person to appear at hearing as consent to the petition.

The adjudicatory hearing must be held as soon as practicable after the petition for a child in need of services is filed. If the court finds the allegations are proven by a preponderance of evidence and the child is a child in need of services, the court must enter an order of adjudication.

At the disposition hearing the court must receive and consider a predisposition study, which must be in writing and be presented by the DJJ or its provider. After reviewing the predisposition study and other relevant materials, the court must hear from the parties and consider all recommendations for court-ordered services, evaluations, treatment and required actions designed to remedy the child's truancy, ungovernable behavior, or running away. The court must enter an order of disposition. An order of adjudication by a court that a child is in need of services is a civil adjudication and not a conviction.

A review hearing must occur within 45 days after the disposition hearing. Additional review hearings may be held as necessary, allowing sufficient time for the child and family to work towards compliance with the court orders and monitoring by the case manager. No longer than 90 days may elapse between judicial review hearings.

The parent, legal guardian, or custodian and the child must be noticed to appear for the review hearing, and the DJJ must be present at such hearing. The court must consider the department's judicial review summary and may proceed with the hearing and enter orders that affect the child and family accordingly. The child's presence may be waived by the court if the court finds good cause. Upon request of the petitioner, the court may close the case and relinquish jurisdiction.

At review hearings, the court may enter further orders to adjust the services case plan to address the family needs and compliance with court orders, including but not limited to ordering the child placed in shelter.

Custody and Shelter Placement

The use of detention care or a secure detention facility intended for juvenile delinquents, or the use of a jail or similar facility is prohibited for a child under the jurisdiction of the court solely for a child in need of services. A child who is held in direct or indirect contempt must be placed in a shelter and may be taken into custody:

- By a law enforcement officer when the officer has reasonable grounds to believe that the child has run away from his or her parents, legal guardian, or custodian;
- By designated school representative or a law enforcement officer when the officer has reasonable grounds to believe the child is absent from school without authorization;
- Pursuant to a court order based on sworn testimony after a child in need of services petition is filed;
- Pursuant to a court order that the child has been found guilty of contempt; and
- By a law enforcement officer when the child agrees to or requests services.

The person taking the child into custody must:

- Release the child to a parent, legal guardian, custodian or responsible adult relative and make full report to the DJJ within 3 days after release.
- Deliver the child to a shelter when under certain circumstances.
- Deliver the child to a hospital for necessary evaluation and treatment if the child is believed to be suffering from a serious physical condition which requires either diagnosis or treatment.
- Deliver the child to a designated public receiving facility for examination if the child is believed to be mentally ill, including immediate threat of suicide.
- Deliver the child to a hospital, addictions receiving facility, or treatment resource if the child appears to be intoxicated and has threatened, attempted, or inflicted physical harm on himself or herself or another, or is incapacitated by substance abuse.

The DJJ must provide temporary voluntary shelter services with 24-hour care and supervision, referrals for services as needed, education at the center or off site, and counseling services for children.

If a child is sheltered due to being a runaway, or a parent, legal guardian, or custodian is unavailable, the shelter must immediately attempt to make contact with the parent, legal guardian, or custodian to advise the family of the child's whereabouts, determine if the child can safely return home, or determine if the family is seeking temporary voluntary shelter services until the family can arrange to take the child home. If the parent, legal guardian, or custodian cannot be located within 24 hours, the DCF shall be contacted.

The court may order that a child adjudicated as a child in need of services be placed in shelter for the purpose of enforcing the court's orders, ensure the child attends school, ensure the child receives needed counseling, and ensure the child adheres to a service plan.

Such placement of a child is designed to provide residential care on a temporary basis and does not abrogate the legal responsibilities of the parent, legal guardian, or custodian with respect to the child, except to the extent that those responsibilities are temporarily altered by court order.

A child adjudicated a child in need of services is to be placed in a shelter for up to:

- Thirty five days; or
- Ninety days, if other alternative, less restrictive remedies have been exhausted, and certain circumstances are met.

The court must review the child's 90-day shelter placement at least every 45 days to determine if continued shelter is deemed necessary, and whether the parent, legal guardian, or custodian has reasonably participated in the child's counseling and treatment program and is following the recommendations to work toward reunification. The court must also determine whether the DJJ's reunification efforts have been reasonable. If the court finds an inadequate level of support or participation by the parent, legal guardian, or custodian before the end of the shelter commitment period, the court must direct a staffing to take place with the DCF.

If the child requires residential mental health treatment or residential care for a developmental disability, the court shall refer the child to the Agency for Persons with Disabilities or the DCF for the provision of necessary services.

Contempt of Court

A child adjudicated as a child in need of services may be placed solely in a shelter for purposes of punishment for contempt of court only if alternative sanctions are unavailable or inappropriate, or if the child has already been ordered to serve an alternative sanction but failed to comply with the sanction.

If court determines the child has committed indirect contempt of a court order, the court may impose an alternative sanction or may proceed with placement in a secure facility. If the court orders shelter placement of a child in need of services, the court must review the matter every 72 hours to determine whether it is appropriate for the child to remain in the facility.

A child who has been held in contempt may be placed for five days for a first offense or 15 days for a second or subsequent offense. Upon a second or subsequent finding of contempt, the court must refer the child to the case staffing committee with a recommendation to file a child in need of services petition.

Truancy

The circuit court has exclusive original jurisdiction of early truancy intervention and may retain jurisdiction for up to 180 days. The court must terminate supervision and relinquish jurisdiction if the child has substantially complied with the requirements of early truancy intervention, is no longer subject to compulsory education, or is adjudicated a child in need of services.

If the school determines that a student subject to compulsory school attendance has had at least five unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a calendar month or 10 unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a 90-day calendar-day period or has had more than 15 unexcused absences in a 90-day calendar period, the superintendent of schools may file a truancy petition seeking early truancy intervention. A principal must report students who have 15 unexcused absences in a period of 90 days and the school board must take action and provide for remedial actions for failure to comply.

If the court determines that the student missed any of the alleged days, the court must enter an order finding the child to be a truant status offender, and order the student to attend school, and order the parent, legal guardian, or custodian to ensure that the student attends school. If the student substantially complies with compulsory school attendance, the court must close the truancy case.

If the student does not substantially comply with compulsory school attendance and court-ordered services required and the child meets the definition of a child in need of services, the case must be referred by the court to the DJJ's designated service provider for review by the case staffing committee with a recommendation to file a petition for child in need of services.

Any truant student that meets the definition of a child in need of services and who has been found in contempt for violation of a court order two or more times must be referred to the case staffing committee with a recommendation that the committee file a petition for a child in need of services. If the child is adjudicated a child in need of services the truancy case must be closed.

Additionally, the bill amends the education statutes to revise provisions relating to child study teams. Some of these revisions include allowing a parent to attend the meeting virtually or by telephone and permitting the meeting to take place even if the parent fails to attend.

Additional Provisions

The bill revises additional provisions including, in part, that:

- Require providers personnel who have direct contact with children must have a level 2 background screening.
- Expand the court's record retention policy to apply to any proceeding under ch. 984, F.S., instead of just children in need of services, and provide that information obtained by the district superintendent, school board employees, and school employees are included under the protection of confidentiality.
- Authorize pharmacists employed by the DJJ to import drugs from Canada under specified programs.
- Provides for supervised release or detention of a child despite the child's risk assessment score in certain circumstances.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 114-0

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/HB 1351 — Registration of Sexual Predators and Sexual Offenders

by Judiciary Committee and Rep. Baker and others (CS/SB 1654 by Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice and Senator Martin)

The bill revises several provisions relating to sexual predator and sexual offender reporting requirements to:

- Require a sexual predator or sexual offender to register specified employment information, including the creation of a new business, occupation, business name, employment address, and telephone number and provides penalties for noncompliance;
- Require a sexual predator or sexual offender to report all in-state travel residences online or in person within 48 hours;
- Require a sexual predator or sexual offender who is unable to update his or her driver license or identification card with a change in residence to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) to report such residence change in person, within 48 hours to the sheriff's office;
- Remove the duplicative requirement of a sexual predator or sexual offender reporting a residence change to the DHSMV when he or she has reported such change to the sheriff's office;
- Require a sexual predator under the supervision of the Department of Corrections (DOC) or Department of Juvenile Justice to report any change in vehicle information in person within 48 hours to the sheriff's office; and
- Require a sexual offender who resides on a vessel or houseboat to report all vessel information to the sheriff's office.

The bill further amends s. 775.21, F.S., to provide the definition of "permanent residence" to mean a place where the person abides, lodges, or resides for three or more consecutive days *that is the person's home or other place where the person primarily lives.*

"Temporary residence" is amended to specify that it does not include a person's transient residence and that an "in-state travel residence" is a type of temporary residence in this state established by a person who already has an existing permanent, temporary, or transient residence in Florida.

Additionally, local law enforcement agencies must conduct address verifications of sexual predators not on supervision with the DOC at least four times a year and verify the addresses of sexual offenders not on supervision with the DOC at least one time a year.

The system for verifying addresses of sexual offenders must be consistent with the federal Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006 and any other federal standards applicable or required to be met as a condition for the receipt of federal funds.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect October 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 114-0

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/CS/CS/HB 1371 — Law Enforcement Officers and Other Personnel

by Judiciary Committee; Budget Committee; Criminal Justice Subcommittee; and Reps. Nix, Alvarez, D., and others (CS/CS/CS/SB 1444 by Fiscal Policy Committee; Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice; Criminal Justice Committee; and Senator Collins)

Critical Infrastructure Mapping Grant Program

The bill creates s. 943.0413, F.S., to establish the Critical Infrastructure Mapping Grant Program within the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), subject to Legislative appropriation, to support the ongoing assessment of the state's vulnerability to, and ability to recover from, acts of terrorism. Funding is available to the state, or any law enforcement agency, county, municipality, or other political subdivision, or any agent thereof, which has constitutional or statutory authority to employ or appoint law enforcement officers.

Grant funds may be used to map critical infrastructure, public gathering places, places of worship, and any other location for which a map would be deemed of high value for facilitating an emergency response. The bill provides requirements for each map that is created.

Blood Testing of Inmates

The bill requires any first responder, or any employee or officer of the sheriff or chief correctional officer who is exposed to a bodily fluid or potential bloodborne pathogen by a person who has been arrested and booked into a county or municipal detention facility to provide notice of such exposure within 24 hours of the exposure. The detention facility must test the inmate who was the cause of exposure, upon receipt of the notice.

The bill requires all detention facilities to update its written procedures for blood testing of an inmate to:

- Specify the conditions which require immediate testing of the inmate;
- Require the test results be provided to:
  - The sheriff or chief correctional officer of the detention facility;
  - Employees or officers who are responsible for the care and custody of the affected inmate; and
  - Any employees, officers, or first responders who provided notice of exposure to the detention facility.

Florida Medal of Valor and Florida Blue/Red Heart Medal

The bill creates two state honorary medals. First, the Florida Medal of Valor for first responders, and related personnel, which may only be awarded to a first responder or related personnel who goes above and beyond the call of duty to save lives. Second, the Florida Blue/Red Heart Medal for law enforcement, which must be awarded to a law enforcement officer, firefighter, correctional officer, or correctional probation officer who is injured in the line of duty.

These awards, must be issued and administered by the FDLE and are authorized to be presented by the Governor or his or her designee. The bill provides guidelines for the nomination and selection of recipients.

Vehicle Kill Switches

The bill prohibits a person from using any device that can be remotely activated to disable a vehicle's engine or to prevent a vehicle's engine from starting unless he or she is:

- the owner of the vehicle;
- a law enforcement officer acting in the course and scope of his or her duties to prevent a felony; or
- any person acting on behalf of a company that offers a subscription, recurring payment program, or lease in connection with the vehicle.

This prohibition does not apply to the manufacture of the vehicle. A violation of this provision is a second degree misdemeanor.

Other Criminal Justice Provisions

Additionally, the bill:

- Specifies that a first responder who has a physical disability resulting from an amputation may continue to serve as a first responder if he or she meets the first responder certification requirements without accommodation.
- Requires a minimum mandatory sentence of 25 years for first degree attempted murder of specified justice system personnel.
- Encourages each state attorney to adopt a pro-prosecution policy for the false reporting of crimes.
- Prohibits a person from depriving specified officers of digital recording devices or restraints and prohibiting a person from rendering such officers' weapons, radios, digital recording devices, or restraints useless.
- Provides that a search warrant issued for a computer, a computer system, or an electronic device that is in the actual possession of a law enforcement agency at the time such warrant is issued must be returned to the court within 45 days after issuance.
- Revises procedures for handling missing persons reports by changing the required review of cases from monthly to annually in the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs).
- Extends the reporting deadline, requiring that missing persons reports be submitted to NamUs within 90 days of being filed, rather than within two hours.
- Removes the requirement that law enforcement enter specified information into NamUs.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 111-0

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/CS/SB 1386 — Assault or Battery on a Utility Worker

by Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice; Criminal Justice Committee; and Senators Yarborough and Leek

The bill amends s. 784.07, F.S., to reclassify offenses of assault or battery one degree higher, when a person knowingly commits an assault or battery against a utility worker while such utility worker is engaged in work on critical infrastructure, as defined in s. 812.141(1), F.S., and is engaged in the lawful performance of his or her duties.

"Utility worker" means a person who bears at least one patch, emblem, organizational identification, or other clear marking that is intended to be plainly visible, that identifies the employing or contracting utility, and that clearly identifies the person as a utility worker under contract with or employed by an entity that owns, operates, leases, or controls a plant, property, or facility for the generation, transmission, distribution, or furnishing to or for the public, of electricity, natural or manufactured gas or propane, water, wastewater, telephone, or communications service, including two or more utilities rendering joint service.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect October 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 113-0

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/HB 1447 — Trespass

by Criminal Justice Subcommittee and Rep. Giallombardo and others (CS/CS/CS/SB 1828 by Rules Committee; Judiciary Committee; Criminal Justice Committee; and Senator Martin)

The bill amends s. 810.09, F.S., to create a third degree felony offense for a person that trespasses on property that is maintained or secured by federal, state, or local law enforcement which is legally posted in a manner prescribed by law.

The bill amends s. 871.05, F.S., to create a third degree felony offense for a person to willfully enter or remain in a venue, without being authorized, licensed, or invited to enter or remain in such venue, during a covered ticketed event wherein attendance exceeds 5,000 persons.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.
Vote: Senate 35-1; House 112-0

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/CS/HB 1451 — Sexual Cyberharassment

by Judiciary Committee; Criminal Justice Subcommittee; and Reps. Baker, Gottlieb, and others (CS/SB 1084 by Criminal Justice Committee and Senator Martin)

The bill revises the definition of "sexually cyberharass" to mean *intentionally* publish to an Internet website or *intentionally* disseminate through electronic means to another person a sexually explicit image of a person without the depicted person's consent and contrary to the depicted person's reasonable expectation that the image would remain private if:

- The image contains or conveys the personal identification information of the depicted person; or
- The personal identification information of the depicted person is not contained or conveyed in the image itself but is contemporaneously published or disseminated in such a manner that a person viewing the personal identification information would reasonably know that such information directly relates to the person depicted in the sexually explicit image.

The bill removes the requirement that a person must disseminate an image for no legitimate purpose, with the intent of causing substantial emotional distress to the depicted person.

The definition of "sexually explicit image" is expanded to include images that depict the display of semen or vaginal secretion on a person.

The crime of sexual cyberharassment is a third degree felony if the person commits the crime for the purpose of pecuniary or any other financial gain. Additionally, it is a third degree felony if a person commits a second or subsequent offense of sexual cyberharassment.

An aggrieved person may receive punitive damages as a remedy for violation of the offense of sexual cyberharassment.

The bill amends s. 775.15, F.S., to extend the statute of limitations for violations of sexual cyberharassment as follows:

- A prosecution for a misdemeanor violation must be commenced within 5 years after the commission of the offense or within 3 years after the date on which the victim discovers the offense, whichever is later; and,
- A prosecution for a felony violation must be commenced within 7 years after the commission of the offense or within 3 years after the date on which the victim discovers the offense, whichever is later.

The bill amends s. 98.0751, F.S., to include a reference to the crime of sexual cyberharassment for pecuniary gain in the definition of "felony sexual offense." A conviction for a felony sexual offense under this section precludes a person from having his or her voting rights restored without restoration of his or her civil rights.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect October 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 115-0

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/CS/HB 1455 — Sexual Offenses by Persons Previously Convicted of Sexual Offenses

by Judiciary Committee; Criminal Justice Subcommittee; and Rep. Baker and others (CS/SB 716 by Criminal Justice Committee and Senator Martin)

The bill creates s. 794.0116, F.S., to provide mandatory minimum sentences for a person who has previously been convicted of an offense listed in the sexual offender registry statute and who is convicted of committing a subsequent specified sexual offense. A person sentenced to a mandatory minimum term of imprisonment under the bill is generally not eligible for gain-time or any form of discretionary early release.

Specifically, a court must sentence a person who was previously convicted of or had adjudication withheld for an offense specified in the sexual offender statute to a mandatory minimum term of imprisonment of:

- 10 years if a person commits:
  - Lewd and lascivious molestation of a victim less than 16 years of age under s. 800.04(5), F.S.;
  - Lewd and lascivious molestation of an elderly or disabled person under s. 825.1025(3), F.S.;
  - Possession of child pornography under s. 827.071(5)(a), F.S.;
  - Computer pornography, prohibited computer usage, or traveling to meet a minor under s. 847.0135, F.S.; or
  - Transmitting child pornography under s. 847.0137, F.S.
- 15 years if a person possesses, with the intent to promote, any photograph, motion picture, exhibition, show, representation, or other presentation which, in whole or in part, includes child pornography, in violation of s. 827.071(4), F.S.
- 20 years if a person commits:
  - Use of a child in a sexual performance under s. 827.071(2), F.S.;
  - Promoting a sexual performance by a child under s. 827.071(3), F.S.; or
  - Selling or buying of minors under s. 847.0145, F.S.

If the mandatory minimum term of imprisonment imposed exceeds the maximum sentence authorized under law, the mandatory minimum term of imprisonment must be imposed. If the mandatory minimum term of imprisonment required to be imposed is less than the sentence that could be imposed, the court must impose a sentence that includes the mandatory minimum term of imprisonment required under the bill.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect October 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 112-0

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/CS/SB 1640 — Public Records/Lethality Assessment Forms

by Rules Committee; Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee; and Senator Grall

The bill makes confidential and exempt from public records a lethality assessment form which contains a victim's information and responses to the lethality assessment. Lethality assessments are administered by law enforcement for any call relating to domestic violence to help determine a victim's risk of serious bodily injury or death at the hands of their aggressor.

The bill allows the information to be shared with domestic violence centers and the state attorney's office. A state attorney may release confidential information in furtherance of its official duties and responsibilities, and to the parties in a pending criminal prosecution as required by law. The exemption applies to forms completed on, before, or after January 1, 2025.

The exemption is subject to Open Government Sunset Review Act and will be repealed on October 2, 2030, unless reviewed and saved from repeal through reenactment by the Legislature.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 114-0

Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/CS/SB 1804 — Capital Human Trafficking of Vulnerable Persons for Sexual Exploitation

by Fiscal Policy Committee; Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice; and Senator Martin

The bill creates a new crime of Capital Human Trafficking of Vulnerable Persons for Sexual Exploitation. A person 18 years or older who knowingly initiates, organizes, plans, finances, directs, manages, or supervises a venture that has subjected a child less than 12 years of age, or a person who is mentally defective or mentally incapacitated, to sexual exploitation commits a capital felony. A person convicted of capital human trafficking must register as a sexual predator.

The bill requires a court to conduct a separate sentencing proceeding to determine whether a defendant convicted of capital human trafficking should be sentenced to death or life imprisonment. Specifically, the bill provides:

- A jury must unanimously find at least two aggravating factors beyond a reasonable doubt for the defendant to be eligible for a sentence of death.
- Aggravating factors and mitigating circumstances that are customized to the new crime for the jury's consideration in arriving at a sentencing recommendation.
- If at least eight jurors determine that the defendant should be sentenced to death, the jury's recommendation must be a sentence of death. If fewer than eight jurors determine that the defendant should be sentenced to death, the jury's recommendation must be a sentence of life imprisonment without the possibility of parole.
- The court has the discretion to enter a death sentence or a sentence of life imprisonment without the possibility of parole if the jury recommends a sentence of death.
- The prosecutor must present evidence of two or more aggravating factors before victim impact evidence may be introduced and argued by the prosecutor.
- The court must enter a written sentencing order regardless of the sentence imposed that includes the reasons for not accepting the jury's recommended sentence, if applicable.
- The state may appeal if the circuit court fails to comply with the sentencing procedures for this new crime.

Additionally, a reference to the new crime is added to various statutes to provide that:

- A defendant's confession or admission, is admissible, under certain circumstances, during trial even if the state is unable to independently prove each element of the crime.
- Parental consent is not required for a pelvic exam of a child who is a victim of capital human trafficking.
- A defendant convicted of capital human trafficking must submit to HIV testing.
- A person commits a life felony if he or she commits a kidnapping or false imprisonment on a person under the age of 13, and in the course of such crime commits capital human trafficking.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect October 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 27-11; House 95-17

Committee on Criminal Justice

HB 6025 — Restrictions on Firearms and Ammunition During Emergencies

by Reps. Miller, Mayfield, and others (SB 952 by Senators Ingoglia, Yarborough, and Collins)

The bill repeals s. 870.044, F.S., which provides that when a county sheriff or a designated city official declares a local state of emergency because there has been an act of violence, a clear and present danger of a riot, public disorder, or widespread disobedience of the law, and substantial injury to persons or property, a person may not:

- Sell or offer to sell firearms or ammunition;
- Intentionally display firearms or ammunition in a store or shop; or
- Intentionally possess a firearm in a public place unless he or she is an authorized law enforcement official or person in military service acting in the official performance of her or his duty.

The bill also repeals the provision which provides that nothing in ch. 870, F.S., may be construed to authorize the seizure, taking, or confiscation of lawfully possessed firearms unless the person is engaged in a criminal act.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.
Vote: Senate 32-5; House 86-28

Committee on Education Postsecondary

CS/CS/SB 312 — Florida Institute for Human and Machine Cognition, Inc.

by Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee; Education Postsecondary Committee; and Senators Gaetz and Harrell

The bill modifies governance and reporting requirements for the Florida Institute for Human and Machine Cognition, Inc. (IHMC). The bill transfers authority for creating not-for-profit subsidiaries from the Board of Governors to the IHMC's board of directors and removes the requirement for the Board of Governors to approve subsidiary articles of incorporation. Subsidiaries are also authorized to enter into affiliation agreements with certain universities. The bill also updates reporting responsibilities, requiring the IHMC to certify compliance with state requirements rather than the University of West Florida.

Additionally, the bill revises the composition of the IHMC board by removing the chair of the University of West Florida Board of Trustees and adding an additional public representative appointed by that board.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 112-0

Postsecondary Education Committee

CS/CS/SB 584 — Young Adult Housing Support

by Fiscal Policy Committee; Education Postsecondary Committee; and Senators Garcia and Osgood

The bill requires each Florida College System (FCS) institution and state university, in consultation with the State Office on Homelessness within the Department of Children and Families (DCF), to develop plans for prioritizing the placement of students who are or were formerly in foster care and those experiencing homelessness or at risk of experiencing homelessness into residence halls and dormitory residences owned by the institution or university. This includes, but is not limited to, students who qualify for a tuition and fee exemption based on meeting the federal definition of homeless children and youth and students who are current or former foster youth. The bill specifies that the Office of Continuing Care is responsible for determining whether a student is or was formerly in foster care, and each FCS and state university is responsible for determining whether a student is experiencing homelessness or at risk of experiencing homelessness.

The bill provides that if an FCS institution or state university implements a priority system for assigning students to, or awarding any of the following, the institution or university must give first priority to students who qualify for a tuition and fee exemption based on meeting the federal definition of homeless children and students who are current or former foster youth:

- Institution-operated or university-operated housing.
- Year-round housing.
- Work-study opportunities.

The bill prohibits FCS institutions and state universities from requiring students to have a cosigner or guarantor to obtain housing if the student receives housing support through the Road to Independence Program or is in a continuing care program for young adults.

The bill requires the DCF, community-based care lead agencies, and housing authorities to take any action required by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development to administer the federal Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) initiative, to include:

- Entering into a memorandum of understanding or letter of intent with all housing authorities within their service areas.
- Providing or securing supportive services for participating youth for the duration of the FYI initiative voucher.
- Providing a written certification to the housing authority verifying the youth's child welfare history.
- Identifying youth eligible for an FYI initiative voucher within the community-based care lead agency's caseload and communicating their eligibility to the youth.

The bill requires the DCF, community-based care lead agencies, and their subcontracted service providers that administer housing funds for young adults in the child welfare system to document actions taken to facilitate a young adult's acquisition of a residential lease, which may include,

but are not limited to, providing assurances to a landlord that funding will be provided on a monthly basis through a housing voucher.

Finally, the bill requires the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA), in consultation with specified groups, to conduct a study of the barriers that young adults who are homeless or were formerly in foster care face when trying to obtain housing. OPPAGA must report its findings by December 1, 2026, to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 38-0; House 116-0

Committee on Education Postsecondary

CS/HB 681 — Apprenticeship and Preapprenticeship Program Funding

by Careers and Workforce Subcommittee and Rep. Melo and others (CS/SB 1458 by Education Postsecondary Committee and Senator DiCeglie)

The bill modifies transparency, financial accountability, and governance requirements in the administration of registered apprenticeship and preapprenticeship programs. It establishes new requirements for partnerships between local educational agencies (LEAs) and program providers, modifies reporting timelines and content, and expands public access to workforce education funding information. Specifically, the bill:

- Requires the Department of Education (DOE) uniform minimum standards and policies for apprenticeship and preapprenticeship programs to allow partnerships between LEAs and program partners to ensure equitable and transparent funding arrangements.
- Requires partnership agreements between LEAs and apprenticeship or preapprenticeship providers to document each party's responsibilities and define a funding split based on services provided. If the LEA's role is administrative only, its funding share may not exceed 10 percent.
- Requires the DOE to develop a standard model contract template for LEA-program partnerships that addresses roles, funding terms, legal compliance, and reporting obligations.
- Modifies the required contents of the DOE's annual apprenticeship and preapprenticeship report by expanding existing reporting elements related to local educational LEA expenditures. Specifically, the bill:
  - Shifts the deadline for publication of the report from September 1 to November 30.
  - Expands the expenditure summary to include both the LEA's and the apprenticeship or preapprenticeship program's responsibilities and costs.
  - Adds to the requirement for reporting allocations by training provider, program, and occupation to also include the total funds "received."
  - Adds to the reporting of administrative costs a requirement to include the total number of personnel hours required to administer each apprenticeship and preapprenticeship program.
- Directs the DOE to develop and publish an online funding transparency tool by July 1, 2026. The tool must provide searchable historical funding data (by source, school district, or Florida College System institution) for the previous three fiscal years.
- Adds requirements for District Workforce Education Funding Steering Committee meetings, including public notice, opportunity for comment, publication of workpapers, and authorization for remote participation. It also moves the deadline for submitting the funding model to the Legislature from March 1 to at least two months before the start of the regular session.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 117-0

Committee on Education Postsecondary

SB 892 — Florida State University Election Law Center

by Senator Simon

The bill creates the Florida State University (FSU) Election Law Center within the FSU College of Law to serve as a nonpartisan, evidence-based academic center focused on election law. The center is authorized to conduct research, hold events, offer training and technical assistance, and support students pursuing careers in election law.

The bill defines "election law" broadly to include historical, empirical, and comparative aspects of voting rights, election administration, redistricting, campaign finance, election audits, election contests, and legal doctrines relevant to election-related litigation, among other topics.

The center's goals include conducting rigorous, objective, and nonpartisan research; providing public education and training; supporting student education and experience in election law; and serving as a resource for election officials and the Legislature. The center is also directed to develop best practices and propose evidence-based reforms to strengthen Florida's electoral system and public confidence in elections.

To fulfill its mission, the center may:

- Hire faculty and staff and develop election law courses.
- Host events such as workshops, lectures, and conferences.
- Conduct and publish election law research and develop public resources.
- Provide continuing education to attorneys, judges, election officials, and others.
- Assist government entities with election law inquiries.
- Offer scholarships, fellowships, and research assistantships to students.
- Partner with other entities to support its goals.

The Department of State, supervisors of elections, and related entities may share relevant data with the center, subject to confidentiality and security safeguards.

The bill requires the dean of the FSU College of Law to appoint a tenured faculty director, who must hire an executive director. The directors oversee the center's programs, budget, staffing, and operations. The center's work is protected by academic freedom and must promote intellectual freedom and viewpoint diversity.

The center will be funded through legislative appropriations, charitable donations, and university funds.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 112-0

Committee on Education Postsecondary

CS/CS/HB 907 — Florida Institute for Pediatric Rare Diseases

by Health Care Budget Subcommittee; Education Administration Subcommittee; and Rep. Anderson and others (CS/CS/SB 1356 by Fiscal Policy Committee; Education Postsecondary Committee; and Senators Burton and Berman)

The bill codifies the Florida Institute for Pediatric Rare Diseases (Institute) within the Florida State University College of Medicine as a statewide resource to advance research, clinical care, and education related to pediatric rare diseases. The Institute's responsibilities include:

- Conducting research on the causes, diagnosis, and treatment of pediatric rare diseases;
- Developing advanced diagnostic and genetic screening tools;
- Providing multidisciplinary clinical services and family support;
- Educating and training healthcare professionals; and
- Collaborating with research institutions, medical centers, advocacy organizations, and government agencies.

The bill creates the Sunshine Genetics Consortium (Consortium), a statewide network of researchers, geneticists, and physicians from Florida's public universities and children's hospitals. The Consortium is responsible for:

- Integrating genomic sequencing technologies;
- Advancing research in genetic and precision medicine;
- Leveraging artificial intelligence in genomics;
- Promoting clinician education and workforce development; and
- Securing external funding to support and expand genetic screening efforts.

The Consortium will be overseen by an oversight board chaired by the director of the Institute and composed of representatives from:

- Florida State University,
- University of Florida,
- University of South Florida,
- University of Miami,
- Florida International University,
- Nicklaus Children's Hospital, and
- One member each appointed by of the Governor, Senate President, and Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The oversight board must meet at least twice annually and submit its first report on research and outreach activities to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by October 15, 2026.

The bill requires the Institute to establish the Sunshine Genetics Pilot Program, a five-year opt-in initiative offering newborn genetic screening, including whole genome sequencing, with parental consent. Under the program:

- Clinical results must be provided to the newborn's healthcare practitioner and parent.
- The Institute must maintain a secure database of screening data; and
- Deidentified data must be shared with Consortium researchers under a data-sharing agreement.

The Institute must submit a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by December 1, 2030, evaluating the pilot program's outcomes, including clinical impact and cost-effectiveness.

Implementation of the Institute, Consortium, and pilot program is contingent upon funding provided in the General Appropriations Act.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 116-0

Committee on Education Postsecondary

CS/CS/CS/HB 1105 — Education

by Education & Employment Committee; Higher Education Budget Subcommittee; Careers & Workforce Subcommittee; and Rep. Kincart Jonsson and others (CS/CS/SB 270 by Appropriations Committee on Higher Education; Education Postsecondary Committee; and Senator Burgess)

The bill revises multiple components of Florida's K–20 education system, including charter school funding and accountability, high school graduation requirements, school bus safety, student device use, and postsecondary program eligibility.

Charter Schools

The bill establishes new funding and reporting requirements related to charter schools. The bill:

- Requires school districts to share any local government infrastructure surtax revenues with eligible charter schools based on enrollment, for levies approved on or after July 1, 2025.
- Requires school districts to provide to district charter schools information related to shared discretionary revenues.
- Requires use of a State Board of Education-adopted standard monitoring tool to monitor charter school performance.

The bill modifies charter school conversion procedures and establishes a new class of "job engine" charter schools focused on job creation and economic development. The bill:

- Requires that charter school conversion applications submitted by parents must originate from parents of students enrolled in the school to be converted and removes the requirement for demonstration of teacher support.
- Authorizes municipalities to apply to establish a job engine charter school, either as a new or conversion school, and allows such schools to give enrollment preference to children of employees of identified job-producing entities.
- Expands Workforce Development Capitalization Incentive Grant eligibility to include job engine charter schools and clarifies eligibility for serving students in grades 6-12.

Private School Construction

The bill authorizes private schools located in counties with four incorporated municipalities to construct new facilities on property that housed specified facilities, such as a church or theater, under that facility's preexisting zoning and land use designations without obtaining a special exception or a land use change and without complying with any mitigation requirements or conditions.

High School Instruction and Graduation Requirements

The bill modifies provisions related to high school instruction and graduation options. The bill:

- Allows marching band to substitute for a performing arts or physical education credit, with exceptions.
- Eliminates the certificate of completion and requires the DOE to develop, by January 1, 2026, guidance about adult education and postsecondary options for students who do not earn a diploma.
- Requires the DOE to develop new applied, equivalent, and integrated courses to substitute for course requirements, and to incorporate work-based internships in graduation planning.
- Expands the Florida Seal of Fine Arts to include Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) arts courses.
- Requires the DOE to establish, by August 1, 2026, competencies for a mathematics endorsement for teachers, which must include specified topics.

Bright Futures Scholarship Program

The bill:

- Expands Bright Futures Scholarship eligibility to include students who graduate from non-Florida high schools while residing with a parent or guardian who retired from military or public service within 12 months prior to graduation.
- Authorizes use of the Advanced Placement (AP) Capstone designation, with conditions, to meet specified diploma eligibility requirements for the Florida Academic Scholars (FAS) award, beginning with students graduating in the 2025–2026 school year, but clarifies that earning the AP Capstone designation does not satisfy the requirements for earning a standard high school diploma.

Career and Professional Education

The bill makes several changes to the Florida Career and Professional Education (CAPE) Act and associated Bright Futures scholarship programs. The bill:

- Updates references to reflect inclusion of the Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars and Florida Gold Seal CAPE Scholars awards in the Bright Futures Scholarship Program.
- Requires CAPE academies and high schools offering career-themed courses to provide students the opportunity to earn the Florida Gold Seal CAPE Scholars award.
- Modifies eligibility for the Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars award by:
  - Shifting the requirement from a 3-course sequential program of studies to 3 career and technical education courses; and
  - Requiring 75 hours of volunteer service, rather than the current 30, to satisfy the community service requirement for both Gold Seal Vocational and Gold Seal CAPE Scholars awards for students entering grade 9 in the 2024–2025 school year and thereafter.

Career Dual Enrollment Access

The bill requires dual enrollment agreements between career centers and the high schools they serve to specify how students will be notified of available transportation options and to address scheduling changes to increase access and participation. The bill also requires that dual enrollment articulation agreements between district school superintendents and public postsecondary institution presidents include any necessary scheduling changes.

Workforce Credential Program for Students with Disabilities

The bill creates a new program to help students with disabilities demonstrate job readiness through employer-recognized credentials. The bill:

- Establishes a DOE-led credentialing program for students with autism or cognitive disabilities, to be implemented by January 1, 2026.
- Requires validation by exceptional student education (ESE) instructors and collaboration with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) on a safety badge.
- Mandates annual reports through 2030, on participation and outcomes.

Student Wireless Communications Device Use

The bill establishes statewide restrictions on student cell phone use and creates a pilot to evaluate full-day prohibitions. The bill:

- Prohibits device use by elementary and middle school students during the school day.
- Prohibits high school use during instructional time, except as authorized, with teacher-designated storage areas and board-adopted usage zones.
- Provides exceptions for medical or educational needs.
- Requires the DOE to study full-day restrictions in high schools in six districts and submit a report with a model policy by December 1, 2026.

School Bus Trespass

The bill modifies enforcement of trespassing laws on school property by:

- Expanding the definition of "school" for purposes of the school trespass statute to include any vehicle operated, owned, or contracted by a school district for student transportation.
- Clarifying that verbal notice or a posted sign is sufficient to support prosecution for trespass.
- Authorizing arrest without a warrant based on probable cause for trespass on a school bus.

Council on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys

The bill revises the structure and operations of the Council on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys by:

- Transferring the council and administrative support from the Department of Legal Affairs to Florida Memorial University.
- Reducing the quorum requirement from 11 to 9 members, and allowing members participating via communications media technology to count toward a quorum and vote.

ABLE Program Governance

The bill authorizes the chair of the Florida Prepaid College Board to designate a representative to serve on the board of directors of Florida ABLE, Inc. It also revises the governance structure of Florida ABLE, Inc. by requiring its board to annually elect a chair from among its members, rather than designating the chair of the Florida Prepaid College Board to serve in that role.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 26-5; House 85-14

Committee on Education Pre-K -12

CS/CS/SB 112 — Children with Developmental Disabilities

by Fiscal Policy Committee; Education Pre-K – 12 Committee; and Senator Harrell

The bill expands and coordinates state efforts to support children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD or autism) and other developmental disabilities through early intervention, school readiness services, specialized educational options, and professional training. It also codifies and assigns new responsibilities to the University of Florida Center for Autism and Neurodevelopment (UF CAN), establishes new grant programs, and extends eligibility for Florida's Early Steps Program.

Early Steps Extended Option

The bill creates the Early Steps Extended Option, which allows eligible children to continue receiving services through the Early Steps Program (Early Steps) until the beginning of the school year following their fourth birthday. To qualify, a child must be:

- Determined eligible for Early Steps services at least 45 days before his or her third birthday;
- Eligible for services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); and
- Enrolled by parent choice in the Extended Option before his or her third birthday.

The Department of Health (DOH) must seek federal approval for the option by July 1, 2026, but may implement the program with state funds regardless of federal participation. The child's family must choose between Early Steps or IDEA Part B services; children may not receive services under both programs concurrently or reenter the Extended Option once they exit. School districts and local Early Steps offices must coordinate transitions to school district services or other programs, convene joint conferences, and develop or modify education plans. The DOH must include performance measures for the program in its annual Early Steps report.

The bill appropriates $720,282 in recurring funds and $35,622 in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund to the DOH and authorizes six full-time equivalent positions to implement the Early Steps Extended Option.

UF Center for Autism and Neurodevelopment

The bill codifies the UF CAN and assigns it a broad range of responsibilities, including:

- Coordinating research, training, public awareness, and best practices related to autism;
- Collaborating with state and local agencies, the Florida State University Autism Institute, each Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD), and others;
- Creating an autism micro-credential, available at no cost to instructional personnel, early learning providers, and child care staff. The micro-credential must align with the autism endorsement and include competencies in identification, instructional strategies, assistive

technology, and classroom support. Participants who earn the credential are eligible for a one-time stipend; and
- Administering new grant programs and reporting annually, beginning August 1, 2026, on expenditures and outcomes.

Autism Charter School Startup Grants

The bill establishes a startup grant program to assist in the creation or expansion of charter schools and laboratory schools that exclusively serve students with autism. UF CAN must administer the program and develop guidelines, including application requirements, planning assistance, eligibility criteria, and accountability reporting. Grants may be used for facility acquisition or improvements, specialized materials and technology, staff recruitment and training, and transportation. Priority is given to applicants serving rural and underserved areas or with a track record of success. Schools may receive funding after securing charter or laboratory school approval.

Specialized Summer Program Grants

The bill creates a specialized summer program grant to support structured, inclusive summer services for children with autism and significant cognitive or behavioral needs. UF CAN must administer the program, publish grant guidelines, and offer technical assistance. Eligible programs must operate for at least four weeks and provide a full-day schedule that may include therapy, skill building, recreational activities, and family training. Staff must be appropriately trained, and grant funding may support facilities, staffing, equipment, curriculum, insurance, and transportation. Programs must submit a post-program report to UF CAN.

Additional Provisions

The bill includes additional provisions related to grant funding and professional development. The bill:
- Expands the Dr. and Mrs. Alfonse and Kathleen Cinotti Health Care Screening and Services Grant Program to allow grant funds to be used for autism screenings, referrals for treatment, and related services provided by nonprofit organizations.
- Requires the Commissioner of Education to review continuing education and inservice training related to ASD and to submit findings and recommendations to the Legislature by December 1, 2025.
- Allows autism-related training to be applied toward the renewal requirements for professional educator certificates.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.
Vote: Senate 38-0; House 113-0

Committee on Education Pre-K - 12

CS/CS/SB 248 — Student Participation in Interscholastic and Intrascholastic Extracurricular Sports

by Judiciary Committee; Education Pre-K – 12 Committee; and Senator Simon

This bill expands the ability of home education program and private school students to participate in interscholastic or intrascholastic athletics at Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) member schools. The bill authorizes students enrolled in a home education program to participate on interscholastic athletic teams at any public school within their school district, provided they reside in that district and meet certain conditions.

The bill provides that middle or high school students in private schools may participate in interscholastic or intrascholastic sports at member public or private schools by:

- Allowing middle or high school students attending an FHSAA-member private school that does not offer their sport of interest to participate in interscholastic or intrascholastic sports at a member public or private school. Current law allows such participation from a non-member FHSAA private school, regardless of whether the schools offers the sport.
- Eliminating the requirement that students be enrolled in a non-FHSAA member private school consisting of 200 students or fewer to participate in activities or sports.

The bill clarifies that, in determining whether an FHSAA school offers an activity or sport, the activity or sport must be expressly designated as one of the following based on the biological sex at birth of the team members: males, men, or boys; females, women, or girls; or coed or mixed, including both males and females.

Finally, the bill requires that any decisions made by an FHSAA committee on appeals, the executive director or his or her designee, and the FHSAA board of directors must be posted online in a searchable format, in compliance with safeguards for privacy of educational records.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-1; House 88-10

Committee on Education Pre-K -12

CS/CS/SB 296 — Middle School and High School Start Times

by Fiscal Policy Committee; Education Pre-K – 12 Committee; and Senators Bradley, Yarborough, and Davis

The bill provides an exemption for a district school board or a charter school governing board from the statutory requirement that by July 1, 2026, the instructional day at all district and charter middle schools may not start before 8 a.m. and high schools may not start before 8:30 a.m. Rather than implementing the statutorily prescribed start times, the bill allows such boards to submit a report to the Department of Education by June 1, 2026, that includes information related to current school start times, documentation of strategies that were considered to implement prescribed start times, and the impacts and unintended consequences of implementing the prescribed start times.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 38-0; House 116-0

Committee on Education Pre-K -12

SB 356 — Holocaust Remembrance Day

by Senators Berman, Davis, Polsky, Arrington, Smith, Gaetz, Avila, Bernard, and Brodeur

The bill establishes "Holocaust Remembrance Day." The bill requires the Governor to annually proclaim January 27 as "Holocaust Remembrance Day" and permits the day to be suitably observed in public schools, the Capitol, and elsewhere as designated by the Governor. The bill permits instruction to be delivered by schools on January 27, or another day as appropriate, on the harmful impacts of the Holocaust and anti-Semitism as well as the positive impacts of the Jewish community on humanity.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 38-0; House 114-0

Committee on Education Pre-K -12

CS/CS/HB 443 — Education

by Education & Employment Committee; Education Administration Subcommittee; and Reps. Snyder, Rizo, and others (CS/CS/SB 822 by Rules Committee; Education Pre-K – 12 Committee; and Senator Rodriguez)

Charter School Administration and Operations

The bill clarifies that charter schools are public schools and should be considered a public facility for the purposes of concurrency related to the development of communities.

The bill allows university lab schools to use discretionary capital improvement funds for purchases, lease-purchases and leases of real property, facilities, insurance, certain vehicles, certain equipment, and other materials.

The bill prohibits sponsors from imposing administrative deadlines on charter schools that are earlier than the sponsor's own deadlines for similar reports or submissions. Additionally, the bill limits imposing deadlines for financial audits or other administrative requirements that are 15-days before the sponsor's own deadline for similar submissions to the Department of Education.

The bill limits a landlord and associated persons from serving on the governing board of a charter school, with an exception for a charter school-in-a-municipality.

The bill allows a high performing charter school to assume the charter of an existing charter school within the same district and requires that the request to assume the charter be in written format from the charter school being assumed.

Charter School Enrollment

The bill expands available enrollment preferences for charter schools to include all preschool children who completed a prekindergarten program at the charter school or at a prekindergarten program with a written agreement with the charter school, not limited to only the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program.

The bill allows certain charter schools to increase the school's enrollment capacity beyond what is stated in the charter agreement, subject to certain conditions, and requires notification by the charter school to the sponsor of the intention to increase enrollment by March 1 for the upcoming school year.

Charter School Students

The bill allows charter schools to adopt their own code of student conduct and requires acknowledgement by the parents if the code is more stringent than the code of student conduct adopted by the charter school's sponsor.

The bill requires that the charter school sponsor and the Department of Education promptly and efficiently share student data, including student assessment data, with charter schools.

The bill clarifies that charter schools must comply with Florida law regarding notification to parents of any change in a student's services or monitoring related to mental, emotional, or physical well-being.

Virtual Education Students

The bill allows full-time virtual students to participate in athletic activities in any public school in the district where the student resides if requirements are met, or develop an agreement with a private school for participation in athletics.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 30-7; House 86-25

Committee on Education Pre-K -12

CS/HB 447 — Disability History and Awareness Instruction

by Student Academic Success Subcommittee and Rep. Salzman and others (CS/SB 540 by Education Pre-K – 12 Committee and Senators Collins, Burgess, Harrell, Wright, Gaetz, Albritton, Arrington, Avila, Berman, Bernard, Boyd, Bradley, Brodeur, Burton, Calatayud, Davis, DiCeglie, Garcia, Hooper, Ingoglia, Jones, Leek, Martin, McClain, Osgood, Passidomo, Pizzo, Polsky, Rodriguez, Rouson, Sharief, Simon, Smith, Truenow, and Trumbull)

The bill designates the act as the "Evin B. Hartsell Act" and modifies the content of disability history and awareness instruction for school districts that choose to provide such instruction during the first two weeks of October.

Specifically, the bill:

- Requires instruction to include grade-specific content for kindergarten through grade–12:
  - Grades K–3: Conversations about bullying and activities to teach about physical disabilities.
  - Grades 4–6: Information about autism spectrum disorder.
  - Grades 7–9: Information about hearing impairments.
  - Grades 10–12: Information about learning and intellectual disabilities.
- Authorizes the Department of Education to consult with the Evin B. Hartsell Foundation to further develop the required instructional materials.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 35-0; House 107-0

Committee on Education Pre-K -12

CS/CS/CS/HB 597 — Diabetes Management in Schools

by Education & Employment Committee; Health Professions & Programs Subcommittee; Education Administration Subcommittee; and Rep. Smith and others (CS/SB 772 by Education Pre-K – 12 Committee and Senator Calatayud)

The bill (Chapter 2025-15, L.O.F.) authorizes school districts or public schools to acquire and maintain a supply of undesignated glucagon and requires that undesignated glucagon be stored in a secure location that is immediately accessible to authorized personnel. The bill authorizes school districts or public schools to enter into arrangements with manufacturers or suppliers to obtain glucagon free of charge or at a fair market or reduced price and allows school districts or public schools to accept donated or transferred glucagon that meet certain requirements. School districts or public schools may also obtain monetary donations or apply for grants to purchase glucagon.

The bill allows school districts or public schools to request a prescription for glucagon from a county health department and authorizes licensed health care practitioners to prescribe glucagon in the name of the school district or public school. The bill further authorizes licensed pharmacists to dispense glucagon.

The bill requires participating schools to make available undesignated glucagon to be administered as ordered in a student's diabetes medical management plan or by a health care practitioner. The bill requires employees to call for emergency assistance and provide parental notification after the administration of glucagon to a student. The bill provides certain persons and entities with immunity from civil and criminal liability for the appropriate administration of glucagon.

The bill requires the State Board of Education to adopt rules to implement these requirements.

These provisions were approved by the Governor and take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 110-0

Committee on Education Pre-K - 12

HB 809 — School Social Workers

by Reps. Hunschofsky, Lopez, V., and others (CS/SB 1150 by Education Pre-K – 12 Committee and Senator Calatayud)

The bill exempts school social workers from the demonstration of mastery of general knowledge and subject area knowledge required for educator certification.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 109-0

Committee on Education Pre-K -12

CS/CS/HB 875 — Educator Preparation

by Education & Employment Committee; Careers & Workforce Subcommittee; and Reps. Rizo, Snyder, and others (CS/SB 1590 by Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education and Senator Burgess)

Implementation Plan

The bill outlines a multi-year implementation plan, beginning with the Department of Education (DOE) establishing a workgroup by September 1, 2025, to revise the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (FEAPs) and to develop a rule to implement uniform core curricula. The workgroup must include representatives from teacher preparation programs, educator preparation institutes, school districts, classroom teachers, and other stakeholders.

The bill requires the DOE to submit the revised FEAPs to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by July 1, 2026, and the State Board of Education (SBE) must consider them by August 1, 2026. Once the revised practices and rules are approved, the bill requires the DOE to also submit an implementation plan to align teacher preparation programs, certification pathways, and core training courses with the new standards.

By July 1, 2027, the DOE must begin developing the Florida Teacher Excellence Examination (FTEE) to align with the revised FEAPs and serve as a readiness measure for certification.

Uniform Core-Curricula

The bill requires all state-approved teacher preparation programs to implement uniform core curricula by August 1, 2027, aligned with the revised FEAPs and adopted by the SBE to ensure consistency in teacher training statewide. The core curricula must:

- Support critical thinking, mastery of academic content, instructional strategies, and teaching competence;
- Be guided by the state's academic standards, including evidence-based assessment and grading practices;
- Include training on evidence-based instructional materials from various sources and on the use of intervention materials;
- Provide scientifically researched and evidence-based reading instruction grounded in the science of reading, with phonics as the primary strategy for teaching word reading;
- Include literacy and mathematics instructional practices and differentiated instruction for English language learners and students with disabilities;
- Require a mastery-based clinical experience in classroom settings; and
- Exclude instruction that distorts significant historical events or promotes identity politics or specified theories.

The bill also requires teacher candidates to complete two specific courses: one on the cognitive science of learning, and one on classroom management and high-impact instructional strategies.

Florida Center for Teaching Excellence

The bill establishes the Florida Center for Teaching Excellence at Miami-Dade College, subject to funding, in collaboration with the University of South Florida, to prepare high-quality teachers through training in cognitive science, teaching strategies, and knowledge-rich curricula.

Coaching for Educator Readiness and Teaching Certification Program

The bill requires the DOE to create the Coaching for Educator Readiness and Teaching (CERT) Certification Program as a competency-based, on-the-job certification pathway for teachers holding a temporary certificate. School districts, charter schools, and charter management organizations are authorized to implement the program to support teacher development and professional certification.

The CERT program must include structured mentorship, individualized professional learning plans, and guided classroom practice. The program must include:

- An initial evaluation of the teacher's competencies to guide the development of a personalized professional learning plan;
- A summative evaluation aligned with the school or district's instructional personnel evaluation system;
- Ongoing professional learning tied to the educator's growth needs; and
- On-the-job training aligned to the revised FEAPs.

The bill requires candidates to pass the applicable subject area examination and complete all reading endorsement competencies, including the practicum, if required by the certificate area.

Teacher Apprenticeship Program

The bill revises mentor qualifications for the Teacher Apprenticeship Program to require three rather than five years of teaching experience, "effective" or "highly effective" evaluations not solely based on value-added model (VAM) scores, and in 2029, completion of clinical educator training and certificate or endorsement in reading, as applicable.

Educator Certification

Effective July 1, 2029, the bill adds new certification pathways and removes outdated ones. Specifically, the bill:

- Adds a general knowledge mastery pathway via education and classroom management coursework.
- Adds a professional preparation pathway through the CERT program.
- Removes the professional education competency exam for candidates completing approved programs.

- Repeals the use of professional learning certification programs and educator preparation institutes for certification.

School Community Professional Learning Act

The bill updates statutory references to align with the revised FEAPs and Florida Educational Leadership Standards. The bill requires training on using approved instructional materials, including intervention resources.

The bill requires the DOE to establish criteria for approving clinical educator and mentor training programs, including components such as FEAPs-based instruction, communication strategies, modeling of evidence-based practices, and educator resilience.

Flexible Education Pathway for School Counselors

The bill creates a flexible pathway to certification for school counselors by reducing internship hour requirements from 600 to 300 for classroom teachers with five years of experience and recent "effective" or "highly effective" evaluations. The SBE and Board of Governors must adopt rules and regulations to support flexibility in meeting internship requirements.

Nondegreed Teachers of Fine and Performing Arts

The bill establishes qualifications for part-time, nondegreed fine and performing arts teachers to require background screening and documentation of a high school diploma and at least three years of successful experience in the specialization area.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law, except as otherwise expressly provided in this act. *Vote: Senate 31-0; House 91-22*

Committee on Education Pre-K -12

CS/CS/CS/SB 1070 — Electrocardiograms for Student Athletes

by Fiscal Policy Committee; Health Policy Committee; Education Pre-K – 12 Committee; and Senators Simon, Avila, and Arrington

The bill cites the act as the "Second Chance Act" and requires that, beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, prior to participating or seeking to participate in interscholastic athletic competition for the first time a student must pass an electrocardiogram (EKG) screening. The EKG screening must be based on standards established by the Florida High School Athletic Association's (FHSAA) Sports Medicine Advisory Committee. The bill allows a student who has received an EKG in the two-years prior to the 2026-2027 school year to use that EKG to meet the requirement.

The bill requires the FHSAA to adopt bylaws to prohibit participation based on the results of an abnormal EKG until the student submits written medical clearance from a specified health professional.

The bill includes a provision that requires each school district to pursue public and private partnerships to provide low-cost EKGs for students and exempt a student who resides in a county where the district is unable to provide EKGs for less than $50 per student.

The bill allows for exceptions to the required EKG for the following reasons:

- Parental objection based on religious reasons, which must be in writing.
- The parent has secured a medical exemption from the EKG by a physician.
- The school district where the student resides is unable to secure low-cost EKGs.

The bill also allows a practitioner in good standing with equivalent licensure issued by another state to provide the EKG.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 111-0

Committee on Education Pre-K -12

CS/SB 1102 — School Readiness Program

by Fiscal Policy Committee and Senator Calatayud

The bill expands eligibility criteria for children with special needs served in the School Readiness (SR) program. The bill expands the individuals who can determine and provide documentation of a child's special needs and allows additional documentation, rather than only an individual education plan, to determine eligibility for the SR program, to include an Individualized Family Support Plan, diagnosis of a special need, or written determination by certain medical professionals.

The bill provides specific criteria for SR providers to be eligible to receive additional funding through the special needs differential rating for serving children with special needs. The criteria include meeting the minimum program assessment score for SR contracting, targeted training for working with children with special needs within a specified timeframe, and subsequent relevant training to maintain eligibility.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 116-0

Committee on Education Pre-K -12

CS/HB 1145 — Workforce Education

by Higher Education Budget Subcommittee and Rep. Shoaf (CS/SB 742 by Education Pre-K – 12 Committee and Senator Simon)

The bill expands access to workforce education grant funding and modifies requirements under the Money-back Guarantee Program.

Specifically, the bill:

- Authorizes charter schools to directly apply for and receive funding through the Workforce Development Capitalization Incentive Grant Program. This allows charter schools to independently propose and implement new or expanded career and technical education programs that lead to industry certifications on the CAPE Industry Certification Funding List.
- Expands the Money-back Guarantee Program, which requires school districts and Florida College System (FCS) institutions to refund tuition to students who are unable to find employment within six months of completing a qualifying workforce program. The bill:
  - Increases the number of required programs from three to six by July 1, 2026, and requires notification to the State Board of Education.
  - Clarifies that enrollment in a designated program automatically enrolls the student in the Money-back Guarantee Program.
  - Allows institutions to set eligibility criteria for reimbursement but specifies that work search and internship requirements may not exceed the requirements for reemployment assistance under s. 443.091, F.S.
  - Requires school districts and FCS institutions to report eligibility criteria annually to the State Board of Education.
  - Expands DOE's annual reporting requirement to include both performance outcomes and the eligibility criteria used by each school district and FCS institution for tuition reimbursement.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 100-4

Committee on Education Pre-K -12

CS/HB 1237 — Human Trafficking Awareness

by Education & Employment Committee and Reps. Booth, Overdorf, and others (CS/SB 444 by Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education and Senators Avila, Collins, and Yarborough)

The bill creates requirements for human trafficking awareness training in public schools.

The bill requires the Department of Education (DOE) by December 1, 2025, to identify a free training curriculum regarding human trafficking awareness, which may be conducted either in-person or online. The training must include:

- The difference between sex trafficking and labor trafficking.
- The identification of students who may be victims of human trafficking.
- The role of school employees in reporting and responding to suspected human trafficking.
- A protocol for reporting suspected human trafficking.

Each public school, including charter schools, must require that the following staff receive human trafficking awareness training:

- Instructional personnel, to include classroom teachers, school counselors, social workers, career specialists, school psychologists, librarians and media specialists, learning specialists, and paraprofessionals.
- School administrators.
- Educational Support Employees, which includes, but is not limited to, doctors, nurses, secretaries, craft workers, and service workers.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 35-0; House 113-0

Committee on Education Pre-K - 12

CS/CS/HB 1255 — Education

by Education & Employment Committee; Student Academic Success Subcommittee; and Reps. Trabulsy, Tramont, and others (CS/CS/SB 1618 by Fiscal Policy Committee; Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education; and Senator Calatayud)

The bill modifies Florida's prekindergarten through grade 12 education system related to early learning, academic standards and student achievement, instructional personnel, and student discipline, and modifies provisions related to higher education which focus on tuition and fee policies, educational programs, and institutional operations. The bill also repeals the Florida School for Competitive Academics.

Early Learning and the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Program

The bill updates eligibility for the School Readiness (SR) program by redefining "economically disadvantaged" as families earning up to 55 percent of the state median income, replacing the previous threshold of 150 percent of the federal poverty level. The bill requires SR program waitlists to track children waiting for services by household income and priority levels. Finally, the bill removes the restriction preventing families from using the full Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) voucher if their child has attended more than 70 percent of the program, allowing transfers between providers without forfeiting benefits.

School Districts

The bill removes the Commissioner of Education's authority to evaluate whether schools have adequately included minority or low-income persons on school advisory councils. The bill also adds liability insurance to the types of casualty insurance expenses that can be funded using revenues from a school district's discretionary millage levy.

K-12 Academic Support and Tutoring

The bill expands student academic support for students with mathematics deficiencies by requiring school districts to notify parents when a student is eligible for the New Worlds Scholarship or tutoring services. The bill requires that the New Worlds Tutoring Program best practice guidelines aligned with Florida's Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.). Standards must be in consultation with the Department of Education's (DOE's) Office of Mathematics and Science. The bill requires that reading interventions be delivered by educators with a reading certification, endorsement, or micro-credential and specifies supervision for instructors with a micro-credential. Finally, the bill requires that instruction on personal financial literacy must include guidance on the costs of higher education and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Charter and Private School Facilities

The bill specifies that local governments cannot enforce building, site, or operational rules on charter schools–such as parking, student capacity, hours of operation, or site size–unless those rules are also uniformly applied to public schools in the area. Charter schools are exempt from land use changes or permits that would not be required of other public or private schools at the same location. Any condition to limit the size or hours of operation imposed on a charter school must match those for public schools and only apply if the charter school is on a site with an already approved development order that includes such conditions.

The bill authorizes private schools located in counties with four incorporated municipalities to construct new facilities on property that housed specified facilities, such as a church or theater, under the preexisting zoning and land use designations without obtaining a special exception or a land use change and without complying with any mitigation requirements or conditions.

Instructional Personnel

The bill replaces the term "critical-teacher shortage" with "high demand teacher needs area" throughout statute. The bill authorizes lab schools and charter school consortia with at least 30 member schools and a DOE-approved professional learning system to submit Teacher of the Year nominations. The bill also requires that background screening for private school employees be transferred to the Agency for Health Care Administration clearinghouse, aligning fingerprinting standards with those applied to public school teachers.

Student Discipline and Safety

The bill provides school districts additional authority to address students' persistent disobedience or disrespect. The bill specifies measures for the child study team and provides that prior to the expiration of an expulsion period, the school superintendent must determine, based on input from the school's threat management team, whether the expulsion should be extended and what educational services should be offered during the extension. The bill requires that if corporal punishment policies are adopted by a school district or charter school, the policies must include a requirement for parental permission. The bill revises requirements for emergency opioid antagonists, removing the specification of naloxone and allowing broader options for K-12 and postsecondary institutions.

Scholarships and Financial Aid

The bill expands Bright Futures Scholarship eligibility to include students who graduate from non-Florida high schools while residing with a parent or guardian who retired from military or public service within 12 months prior to graduation. The bill also authorizes the use of tutoring hours performed by students under the Reading Achievement Initiative for Scholastic Excellence (RAISE) program, whether paid or unpaid, to count toward community service requirements for both high school graduation and the Bright Futures program. The bill also clarifies and maintains

the eligibility of EASE Grant institutions under DOE's oversight for funding through the Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) initiative.

Higher Education

The bill renames Hillsborough Community College to Hillsborough College. The update cycle for university facility master plans is extended from every five years to every ten years. The bill authorizes the State Board of Education (SBE) and the Board of Governors to identify a national consortium to develop general education courses for high school students and to deliver related training under the Florida Partnership for Minority and Underrepresented Student Achievement. The bill expands acceptable assessments for university preeminence eligibility by including the Classical Learning Test (CLT), with a qualifying average score of 83 or above on a 120-point scale.

The bill revises the criteria for nonpublic religious postsecondary institutions to operate without licensure. The bill requires the Commission for Independent Education (commission) to approve or deny institution compliance affidavits in a public meeting. The bill authorizes the commission to take certain actions against an institution that fails to comply with operating requirements.

Military-Connected Students

The bill extends the repeal date of the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission from July 1, 2025, to July 1, 2028, and requires the DOE to develop training modules for employees to expedite student record transfers for military families.

Assessments and Standards

The bill requires that standards documents approved by the SBE contain only the standards and benchmarks, without additional clarification statements. All currently approved standards documents must be revised no later than July 1, 2026. The bill adds the CLT 10 assessment as an approved test option for students in grade 10 under the Florida Partnership for Minority and Underrepresented Student Achievement.

Public Agency Provisions

The bill revises membership in local children's services councils and increases terms from two to three years. The bill also waives open competition requirements for state agencies to hire individuals who have completed an apprenticeship program with that agency.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 30-0; House 100-0

Committee on Education Pre-K -12

CS/SB 1374 — School District Reporting Requirements

by Rules Committee and Senator Yarborough

The bill modifies reporting, self-reporting, and background screening requirements for school employees and volunteers. It expands mandatory notifications, requires new school district policies, and authorizes additional options for background checks.

Specifically, the bill:

- Requires district school boards to adopt a policy for the temporary removal of instructional personnel from the classroom within 24 hours after notification of an arrest for a felony or any misdemeanor offense listed in Level 2 background screening standards.
- Expands law enforcement notification requirements to include misdemeanor offenses under Level 2 background screening.
- Expands self-reporting requirements for instructional and administrative personnel, requiring them to report felony and misdemeanor arrests under Level 2 background screening standards within 48 hours. The bill clarifies that self-reports are not admissions of guilt and are inadmissible in any proceeding.
- Authorizes public schools and private schools that participate in state scholarship programs to screen volunteers through the Care Provider Background Screening Clearinghouse or request national criminal history checks through the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

The bill also requires school districts to handle sealed and expunged criminal records disclosed through self-reporting in accordance with existing confidentiality laws.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 115-0

Committee on Education Pre-K - 12

CS/CS/SB 1402 — Students Enrolled in Dropout Retrieval Programs

by Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education; Education Pre-K – 12 Committee; and Senator Yarborough

The bill authorizes a Virtual Instruction Program (VIP) provider to choose to receive a school improvement rating in lieu of a school grade for each district with which it contracts and requires that the school improvement rating be based on the assessment scores of all students served by that VIP within the school district.

The bill exempts VIP providers that operate exclusively as a dropout retrieval program from receiving a district grade. The bill also requires all dropout retrieval programs to choose between receiving a school improvement rating or a school grade. The bill defines a dropout retrieval program as a program serving students who have officially withdrawn from high school before graduation and were not engaged in the education system at the time of enrollment.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 116-0

Committee on Education Pre-K -12

CS/SB 1470 — School Safety

by Appropriations Committee on Pre-K – 12 Education and Senator Burgess

The bill expands the Chris Hixon, Coach Aaron Feis, and Coach Scott Beigel School Guardian Program (school guardian program), clarifies perimeter and door security requirements, modifies training and oversight for school security guards, and refines procedures for threat assessment and emergency response.

School Guardian Program Options and Oversight

The bill aligns the training, certification, and oversight of school security guards with requirements for school guardians. Specifically, the bill:

- Requires all school security guard training, including initial and ongoing training, to be conducted or approved by a sheriff;
- Requires background screening, psychological evaluation, and drug testing before training;
- Prohibits sheriffs from waiving training or screening costs for security agencies;
- Requires sheriffs to maintain training, certification, and firearm qualification records for each certified guard; and
- Allows sheriffs to provide training to individuals legally allowed to carry a concealed firearm under Florida law, including under permitless carry provisions.

The bill authorizes child care facilities to participate in the school guardian program to the same extent as a private school.

Reporting Requirements for School Safety Personnel

The bill modifies existing reporting requirements for school guardians and school security guards, which:

- Aligns school security guards reporting to school guardian requirements;
- Requires security agencies, in addition to schools and sheriffs, to report school security guard employment and separation data to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE); and
- Directs the FDLE to maintain a consolidated statewide list of both school guardians and school security guards, including certification, appointment, and separation data, and any firearm discharges or misconduct reported under law.

Clarifications to Locked Campus and Access Requirements

The bill clarifies and modifies school perimeter and door security requirements. Specifically, the bill:

- Limits the school perimeter, locked access, and door security requirements to the time beginning 30 minutes before the school day and ending 30 minutes after;

- Allows doors or gates to remain unlocked if a locked barrier separates the space from student-occupied areas;
- Provides exemptions for:
  - Career and technical education spaces where locking doors would pose health or safety risks (with documentation in the Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool);
  - Common areas such as cafeterias and media centers, except during instructional time or student testing; and
- Requires each substitute teacher to receive school safety protocols and procedures before his or her first day of substitute teaching.

Temporary Door Lock Use During Active Assailant Incidents

The bill allows classrooms with permanently installed door locks to also use temporary door locks during active assailant incidents if the devices:

- Can be removed from the egress side in a single operation without a key;
- Can be removed from the ingress side with a key or other credential;
- Comply with the Florida Fire Prevention Code, with allowance for installation at any height; and
- Are incorporated into the school's active assailant response plan.

Panic Alert and Digital Mapping System Integration

Subject to appropriation, the bill requires the Department of Education to establish and maintain a centralized system that integrates panic alert systems and digital maps used by public and charter schools. All such schools must connect their panic alert systems to the centralized system and ensure interoperability for real-time emergency coordination.

Behavioral Threat Management and Data Privacy

The bill clarifies the responsibilities of the Office of Safe Schools (OSS) regarding behavioral threat assessment and management. The bill codifies OSS's role in maintaining the statewide threat management process and the Florida-specific threat assessment instrument, and authorizes the State Board of Education to adopt rules governing access to threat assessment reports stored in the statewide threat management portal.

Florida Institute of School Safety Workgroup

The bill directs the OSS to convene a stakeholder workgroup to develop recommendations for the creation of a Florida Institute of School Safety. The workgroup must include law enforcement, school personnel, mental health professionals, and other experts. OSS must submit its recommendations to the Governor and Legislature by January 1, 2026.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 110-0

Committee on Education Pre-K -12

CS/CS/SB 1514 — Anaphylaxis in Public and Charter Schools

by Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education; Education Pre-K – 12 Committee; and Senators Smith, Arrington, Davis, and Avila

This bill requires district school boards and charter school governing boards to ensure that the emergency action plan for anaphylaxis for each student in kindergarten through grade eight is in effect and accessible at all times when the student is on campus, including during extracurricular activities, athletics, school dances, and contracted before-and-after-school programs at the school.

The bill also requires district school boards and charter school governing boards to ensure that each school serving these grade levels provides training to an adequate number of school personnel and contracted staff in preventing and responding to allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis. The training must include instruction on recognizing the signs of an anaphylactic reaction and administering an FDA-approved epinephrine delivery device that has a pre-measured, appropriate weight-based dose.

The bill requires the State Board of Education, in consultation with the Department of Health, to adopt rules by October 1, 2025, including identifying an approved training curriculum.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 113-0

Committee on Education Pre-K -12

CS/HB 1607 — Cardiac Emergencies

by Education Administration Subcommittee and Reps. Yarkosky, Rizo, and others (CS/SB 430 by Education Pre-K – 12 Committee and Senators Simon, Burgess, and Arrington)

The bill requires school districts to provide basic first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training to students, once in middle school and once in high school, through physical education or health classes. The instruction must include the opportunity to practice CPR skills and incorporate the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED).

The bill creates a Plan for Urgent Life-Saving Emergencies (PULSE), which each school district must develop to guide personnel in responding to sudden cardiac arrest and similar emergencies on school grounds. The plan must incorporate evidence-based elements, and consider those recommended by the American Heart Association, and be integrated with local emergency response protocols.

The bill also requires that by July 1, 2027, each public school, including charter schools, have at least one operational AED on campus in a clearly marked and publicized location. Schools must maintain the AED in accordance with manufacturer guidelines, keep verification records, register the AED's location with the local emergency medical services medical director, and ensure that appropriate staff are trained in CPR and defibrillator use. The bill also clarifies that a public school's compliance with the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) rules regarding AEDs does not constitute compliance with these requirements.

The bill provides civil liability protection for school employees and volunteers under the Good Samaritan Act and the Cardiac Arrest Survival Act.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 113-0

Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

CS/CS/SB 56 — Geoengineering and Weather Modification Activities

by Rules Committee; Environment and Natural Resources Committee; and Senators Garcia, Leek, Yarborough, and Gruters

The bill prohibits geoengineering and weather modification activities and provides such activities are a third-degree felony, punishable by up to five years' imprisonment and fines of up to $100,000, except aircraft operators and controllers who are subject to a fine of up to $5,000 and five years' imprisonment. All funds collected must be deposited in the Air Pollution Control Trust Fund. The bill directs the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to establish a dedicated e-mail address and online form to allow people to report suspected geoengineering and weather modification activities. DEP must investigate reports warranting further review and must refer reports to the Department of Health or the Division of Emergency Management when appropriate.

The bill provides that, beginning October 1, 2025, publicly owned airports must report monthly to the Florida Department of Transportation (DOT) any aircraft equipped for geoengineering or weather modification activities. DOT may not expend state funds to support public airports that do not comply.

The bill also removes DEP's authority to conduct studies, research, experimentation, and evaluations in the field of weather modification.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 28-9; House 82-28

Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

CS/SB 164 — Vessel Accountability

by Environment and Natural Resources Committee and Senator Rodriguez

The bill amends and creates statutes concerning vessel ownership, nuisance and derelict vessels, and anchoring and mooring practices.

The bill clarifies and expands the definition of a "vessel owner." For vessels at risk of becoming derelict, the bill provides that if the owner or operator is present on the vessel, a law enforcement officer can immediately conduct a test of the vessel's effective means of propulsion for safe navigation. The bill provides that a vessel will be declared a public nuisance if it is found to be at risk of becoming derelict three times within a 24-month period.

The bill creates a free long-term anchoring permit for vessel owners or operators who intend to anchor a vessel within one linear nautical mile of an anchorage point for 14 days or more within a 30-day period.

Regarding civil and criminal penalties, the bill:

- Adds violations relating to expired registration and long-term anchoring to the list of noncriminal violations that may be enforced by a uniform boating citation.
- Provides penalties for long-term anchoring violations.
- Increases penalties for subsequent violations of derelict vessel laws and makes residing or dwelling on a derelict vessel a criminal offense.

The bill also expands the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's existing local government grant program to support the derelict vessel prevention and voluntary turn-in program.

Except as otherwise provided in the bill, if approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 113-0

Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

CS/CS/HB 209 — State Land Management

by State Affairs Committee; Natural Resources & Disasters Subcommittee; and Reps. Snyder, Gossett-Seidman, and others (CS/SB 80 by Environment and Natural Resources Committee and Senators Harrell, Bradley, Smith, Gaetz, Davis, Bernard, and Avila)

The State Park Preservation Act requires the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to manage state parks and preserves in a manner that will provide the greatest combination of benefits to the public and to the land's natural resources, as well as for conservation-based recreational uses, public access, Florida heritage and wildlife viewing, and scientific research.

The bill defines "conservation-based recreational uses" and requires those uses to be managed in a manner that ensures the conservation of the state's natural resources by minimizing impacts to undisturbed habitat. It prohibits the construction of sporting facilities, including, but not limited to, golf courses, tennis courts, pickleball courts, ball fields, and other similar facilities. However, it does not prohibit the continued operation, maintenance, or repair of any such sporting facilities, or other facilities existing within a state park.

The bill allows for the acquisition or installation of campsites and cabins at state parks, which must be compatible with land management plans and sited to avoid impacts to a park's critical habitat and natural and historical resources. It prohibits DEP from authorizing use or construction activities within a state park that may cause significant harm to the park's resources. It directs that any use or construction activity must be conducted to avoid impacts to a state park's critical habitat and natural and historical resources. The bill prohibits the installation or operation of certain lodging establishments at a state park. However, it does not prohibit the continued operation, maintenance, or repair of any such lodging establishment existing within a state park.

The bill renames the St. Marks River Preserve State Park as the Ney Landrum State Park.

Regarding land management plans, the bill requires public hearings for plan updates, adds a 30-day deadline for publication of a land management plan before a public hearing, requires plans for state parks to be published by that deadline, directs plans for state parks to be developed with input from an advisory group, and adds a 30-day notice deadline for advisory group public hearings.

The bill directs DEP to submit a report on the state park system to the Governor and the Legislature by December 1, 2025.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 112-0

Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

HB 295 — Comprehensive Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan

by Reps. Casello, Hart, and others (SB 200 by Senator Berman)

The bill directs the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to develop a comprehensive waste reduction and recycling plan by July 1, 2026, to be based on the recommendations contained within DEP's "Florida and the 2020 75% Recycling Goal, Final Report." The bill directs DEP to convene a technical assistance group within DEP to help develop the plan and provide a report to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives upon its completion. The report must include recommendations for statutory changes necessary to achieve the recycling goals and strategies identified in the plan.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 38-0; House 116-0

Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

CS/SB 388 — Trust Funds for Wildlife Management

by Appropriation Committee and Senator Rodriguez

The bill amends statutes that provide for two trust funds created within the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). The bill specifies that the Grants and Donations Trust Fund must be used for grant and donor agreement activities regardless of the source of funding for those activities.

Regarding the Nongame Wildlife Trust Fund, the bill removes the requirement that FWC must designate an identifiable unit to administer the trust fund and it authorizes FWC to use trust fund proceeds for law enforcement purposes. Current law authorizes FWC to enter into cooperative agreements or memoranda of understanding with related agencies to coordinate nongame programs. The bill adds that FWC may enter into voluntary agreements. It also allows FWC to enter into cooperative agreements, voluntary agreements, or memoranda of understanding with related agencies and private landowners to coordinate nongame programs.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 112-0

Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

CS/CS/HB 481 — Anchoring Limitation Areas

by State Affairs Committee; Natural Resources & Disasters Subcommittee; and Reps. Lopez, V. and others (SB 866 by Senator Martin)

The bill creates an exception to allow local governments to regulate vessels that anchor for one hour or more overnight for more than 30 days in any six-month period within the jurisdiction of a county with a population of 1.5 million or more. This excludes any time vessels are anchored overnight in a mooring field or for marine construction, installation, or maintenance work.

The bill adds five additional anchoring limitation areas in Biscayne Bay in Miami-Dade County, within which a person may not anchor a vessel at any time overnight. The additional anchoring limitation areas lie between:

- Palm Island and Star Island,
- Palm Island and Hibiscus Island,
- Palm Island and Watson Island,
- The Sunset Islands, and
- Sunset Island I and State Road 112.

The bill prevents the owner or operator of a vessel or floating structure from anchoring or mooring within 300 feet outward from the marked boundary of a public mooring field. The bill extends the prohibition from 100 to 300 feet.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming a law.
Vote: Senate 29-8; House 115-0

Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

CS/CS/SB 492 — Mitigation Banks

by Rules Committee; Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government; and Senator McClain

The bill establishes the following standardized schedule for releasing mitigation credits:

- 30 percent upon recording a conservation easement and establishing financial assurances (or 100 percent for preservation-only banks).
- 30 percent after completing initial construction activities.
- 20 percent upon meeting interim performance criteria.
- 20 percent upon meeting final success criteria.

The bill provides that permit applicants are entitled to a one-time use of credits from a mitigation bank outside the mitigation bank service area if the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) or water management district confirms there are an insufficient number or type of credits available within the impacted area. Out-of-service-area credits may not be used until all out-of-kind credits within the service area are used. The following multipliers, which the bill declares to meet the requirements for addressing cumulative impacts, apply to credits outside the service area:

- 1.0 multiplier for use of in-kind credits within the service area.
- 1.0 multiplier for use of in-kind and out-of-service-area credits when the service area overlays part of the same regional watershed as the proposed impacts.
- 1.2 multiplier for use of in-kind and out-of-service-area credits located within a regional watershed immediately adjacent to the regional watershed overlain by a mitigation bank service area in which proposed impacts are located.
- When in-kind credits are not available to offset impacts in the regional watershed immediately adjacent to the regional watershed overlain by a bank service area in which the proposed impacts are located, an additional 0.25 multiplier must be applied for each additional regional watershed boundary crossed.
- An additional 0.50 multiplier must be applied if the mitigation used to offset impacts entails an out-of-kind replacement.

Once the amount of mitigation required to offset impacts is determined, the bill requires DEP or the water management district to contact all mitigation banks with a service area encompassing the location of the proposed impacts within seven business days to verify the availability of credits. Mitigation banks have 15 days to respond; if no response is received, it is presumed credits from that bank are not available. Mitigation banks must submit annual reports detailing the number and type of available credits for sale. DEP and water management districts must compile these reports and provide an annual assessment of the state's mitigation banking system to the Legislature.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 30-3; House 87-26

Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

CS/HB 733 — Brownfields

by Natural Resources & Disasters Subcommittee and Rep. Anderson and others (CS/CS/SB 736 by Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government; Environment and Natural Resources Committee; and Senators Truenow and Brodeur)

The bill removes provisions related to local governments' role in mapping institutional controls. For a brownfield site within a larger contaminated area, if cleanup criteria are met, the bill prohibits the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) or delegated local programs from: (1) denying "No Further Action" status, or (2) refusing to issue a site rehabilitation completion order, regardless of whether the site has engineering or institutional controls.

Rather than allowing tax credit applicants to receive 25 percent of the total site rehabilitation costs in the final year once a "No Further Action" order is issued, the bill provides that applicants are eligible for this additional credit after DEP has approved the annual site rehabilitation application and issued a site rehabilitation order. The applicant must submit the claim for the additional 25 percent within two years of receiving the site rehabilitation completion order. The bill removes a provision that prohibited unpermitted sites operated for monetary compensation from claiming tax credits for the costs of solid waste removal under the brownfield program. It also changes the deadline for the annual site rehabilitation tax credit certificate award from May 1 to June 1 and extends the time DEP has to respond to a tax credit applicant's response to a notice of deficiency.

The bill allows local governmental entities, including persons organized or united with the local governmental entity for business purposes, to participate in the program, provided they did not cause or contribute to the contamination of the brownfield site after July 1, 2025.

The bill removes references to brownfield sites being commercial, industrial, or contaminated sites. Instead, the bill defines brownfield site as real property identified in a brownfield site rehabilitation agreement executed by the person responsible for brownfield site rehabilitation of the property and DEP or a delegated local pollution control program, as applicable.

The bill also provides that, for sites subject to certain federal enforcement actions or permits that would otherwise be ineligible to participate in the brownfield program, DEP must allow participation if the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issues a no-objection letter, and the applicant can reasonably demonstrate compliance with contamination cleanup criteria. DEP may not require as a condition of such letter that EPA forego enforcement of federal corrective action authority at brownfield sites that have received a site rehabilitation completion order.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 32-0; House 116-0

Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

HB 735 — Water Access Facilities

by Rep. Brackett and others (SB 1162 by Senators Leek and Brodeur)

The bill provides that the Florida Department of Environmental Protection may designate facilities as "Clean Marine Manufacturers." Like other marinas, boatyards, mooring fields, and marine retailers with similar designations, Clean Marine Manufacturers are eligible for a discount on sovereignty submerged land leases and a waiver of extended-term lease surcharges.

The bill expands the authorized uses of funds from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's grant programs, which are funded by the Fuel Tax Collection Trust Fund, to include construction and maintenance of parking for boat-hauling vehicles and trailers.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 112-0

Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

SB 796 — General Permits for Distributed Wastewater Treatment Systems

by Senator Bradley

The bill grants a general permit for the replacement of existing onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems with distributed wastewater treatment systems (DWTSs), which are composed of one or more distributed wastewater treatment units (DWTUs). The bill defines a DWTU as an advanced onsite closed-tank wastewater treatments system that is remotely operated and controlled by the permittee using a control system and is designed to achieve secondary treatment standards and a minimum of 80 percent total nitrogen removal before discharging to a subsurface application system.

The general permit granted by the bill allows the installation of a DWTU to proceed without further action by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) if the permittee notifies DEP at least 30 days before the installation. The notification must certify that a Florida registered professional designed the DWTU in compliance with applicable rules and the proposed DWTU meets specific design and operational requirements. To be eligible for the general permit, the DWTU and the DWTS must be commonly owned and operated by the permittee. The bill also requires that the permittee conduct monthly reporting, annual inspections, recordkeeping, and biosolids management in accordance with applicable rules.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 114-0

Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

CS/SB 830 — Disposition of Migrant Vessels

by Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government and Senator Rodriguez

The bill prohibits a person, firm, or corporation from leaving any migrant vessel upon waters of the state. It defines a "migrant vessel" as an irregularly constructed and equipped maritime vessel designed, intended, or used for the purpose of undocumented immigrant transportation which was built or assembled using or combining makeshift or improvised materials or material components and either was not constructed by a boat manufacturer or was not assigned a hull identification number.

The bill requires a migrant vessel on public property to be removed within five days following a law enforcement officer posting a notice on the vessel. If it is not removed during that timeframe, the bill authorizes a law enforcement agency to remove and dispose of the vessel.

The bill authorizes state funds and the use of federal disaster funds for the removal of migrant vessels.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 112-0

Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

HB 1123 — Sewer Collection Systems

by Reps. Cassel, Woodson, and others (SB 1784 by Senator Pizzo)

The bill authorizes a municipality to utilize revenue generated by the municipality from operation of the municipality's central sewage system for expansion of the central sewage system.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 111-0

Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

HB 1143 — Permits for Drilling, Exploration, and Extraction of Oil and Gas Resources

by Reps. Shoaf and Tant (SB 1300 by Senators Simon and Brodeur)

The bill prohibits drilling, exploration, or production of oil, gas, or other petroleum products within areas of counties designated as rural areas of opportunity that are within 10 miles of a national estuarine research reserve.

The bill also requires the Department of Environmental Protection to consider certain factors when determining whether natural resources of certain bodies of water and shore areas are adequately protected from potential accidents or blowouts from oil or gas drilling and exploration activities. Specifically, the department's evaluation must consider the ecological community's current condition, hydrologic connection, uniqueness, location, fish and wildlife use, time lag, and the potential costs of restoration.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-1; House 109-0

Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

SB 1228 — Spring Restoration

by Senator McClain

The bill allows a domestic wastewater facility with an approved plan to eliminate nonbeneficial surface water discharges to request to amend the plan to incorporate a reclaimed water project identified in an Outstanding Florida Springs recovery or prevention strategy. The Department of Environmental Protection must approve the request within 60 days if the following conditions are met:

- The identified use of reclaimed water will benefit a rural area of opportunity.
- The project will provide at least 35 million gallons per day of reclaimed water to benefit an Outstanding Florida Spring.
- The project involves more than one domestic wastewater treatment facility.
- The project implementation and surface water discharge elimination schedule meets the minimum flows and minimum water levels requirements for Outstanding Florida Springs and has an implementation date of no later than January 1, 2039.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 109-0

Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

CS/SB 1388 — Vessels

by Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government and Senator Trumbull

The "Boater Freedom Act" provides that a law enforcement officer may not board any vessel or perform a vessel stop without probable cause that a violation of vessel safety laws has occurred or is occurring, regardless of whether the owner or operator of the vessel is on board. It prohibits a law enforcement officer from performing a vessel stop or boarding a vessel for the sole purpose of making a safety or marine sanitation equipment inspection and provides that a violation of safety and marine sanitation equipment requirements may only be considered a secondary offense.

The bill requires the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to create a "Florida Freedom Boater" safety inspection decal. The decal will be issued following the demonstration of compliance with safety equipment carriage and use requirements.

The bill also contains the "Watercraft Energy Source Freedom Act," which prohibits a state agency, municipality, government entity, or county from restricting the use or sale of a watercraft based on the energy source used to power the watercraft.

The bill authorizes FWC to modify the allowable means of anchoring, mooring, beaching, or grounding of vessels within springs protection zones. This is added to current law, which authorizes FWC to restrict vessel speed and operation and to prohibit vessel anchoring, mooring, beaching, or grounding within springs protection zones. The bill revises the threshold to establish these zones from preventing *harm* to preventing *significant harm* to certain springs, spring groups, and spring runs. The bill requires vessel operation, anchoring, mooring, beaching, or grounding to be the predominant cause of the significant harm.

The bill prohibits FWC from issuing a fishing license to any commercial fishing vessel owned by any alien power. Current law prohibits FWC from issuing a fishing license to any commercial fishing vessel owned by an alien power associated with communism.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 35-2; House 104-7

Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

SB 7000 — OGSR/Site-Specific Location Information for Endangered and Threatened Species

by Environment and Natural Resources Committee

The bill saves from repeal the current public records exemption making site-specific location information on endangered and threatened species not held in captivity exempt from public inspection and copying requirements.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect October 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 38-0; House 113-2

Committee on Ethics and Elections

CS/SB 348 — Ethics

by Ethics and Elections Committee and Senators Gaetz, Collins, and Avila

The bill adds to the Code of Ethics a "stolen valor" provision prohibiting candidates, public officers, and public employees from knowingly making certain fraudulent representations relating to military service for the purpose of material gain, including:

- Representing that he or she is or was a servicemember or veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States, actively served during a wartime era, served in combat, or was a prisoner of war.
- Representing that he or she was a recipient of a decoration, medal, title, or honor from the Armed Forces of the United States or that is otherwise related to military service.
- Representing that he or she is a holder of an awarded qualification or military occupational specialty.
- Wearing the uniform or any medal or insignia authorized for use by members or veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States which he or she is not authorized to wear.

The bill also expands the existing authority to seek wage garnishment for unpaid fines stemming from judgments of ethics complaints by:

- Allowing for withholding the lesser of 25 percent or the maximum allowable under federal law, including an amount to cover the administrative cost of withholding the payment, from any salary-related payment until the fine is satisfied.
- Allowing for referral of any unpaid penalty to a collection agency.
- Allowing actions to collect an unpaid penalty within 20 years after the date the penalty is imposed.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 39-0; House 114-0

Committee on Ethics and Elections

CS/HB 1205 — Amendments to the State Constitution

by State Affairs Committee and Rep. Persons-Mulicka and others (CS/SB 7016 by Fiscal Policy Committee; Ethics and Elections Committee; and Senators Gaetz and Grall)

Chapter 2025-21, L.O.F. makes the following changes to Florida's citizens' initiative process:

- Limits the number of general election cycles a petition can remain active without achieving at least 25% of the signatures required to appear on the ballot to three.
- Limits sponsorship of initiative petitions to one per political committee.
- Requires sponsors and circulators to submit completed petition forms within 10 days.
- Revises the elements required on the petition forms to include additional details about the proposed amendment and the voter signing the petition.
- Requires a person who collects more than 25 signed petition forms, not counting his or her own or those of immediate family members, to register as a petition circulator.
- Prohibits noncitizens, non-Florida residents, and felons who have not had their right to vote restored from registering as petition circulators.
- Requires additional personal identifying information for applicants for petition circulator.
- Requires training for petition circulators.
- Authorizes the Division of Elections to revoke a circulator's registration upon written request of the sponsor or for violation of regulations.
- Increases penalties or creates new ones related to late submission or nonsubmission of completed petition forms, knowingly allowing an ineligible person to collect petition forms, filling in missing information on a submitted form, copying or retaining a voter's personal information, and prefilling voter information on petition forms.
- Specifies that a petition sponsor is not liable for a fine if it discovers and reports a violation.
- Revises the existing prohibition against compensating a petition circulator on a per-signature basis.
- Adds a violation of the Election Code relating to irregularities or fraud involving issue petition activities to the list of racketeering offenses.
- Requires supervisors of elections to notify voters whose signatures are verified and to provide an opportunity for such persons to report that their signatures were forged or misrepresented.
- Revises provisions governing petition form retention, petition form transmittal requirements, and the costs supervisors may charge for signature verification.
- Requires the Office of Election Crimes and Security to investigate the activities of the sponsor, circulator, and anyone collecting petitions on the sponsor's behalf if the percentage of invalid signatures in any given county during a reporting period exceeds 25%.
- Requires that completed petition forms collected by ineligible or unregistered circulators be invalidated.

Regarding the Financial Impact Estimating Conference (FIEC) and financial impact statements, the bill:

- Clarifies that appointees to the FIEC are to be professional staff from all appointing authorities, and that the FIEC may only be convened by the Senate President and House Speaker.
- Provides for inclusion of the financial impact statement on the petition form.
- Adds the financial impact statement to the issues subject to automatic Supreme Court review.

The bill also:

- Clarifies processes for certification of and challenge to constitutional amendments.
- Prohibits the use of public funds to advocate for or against any issue that is the subject of a proposed constitutional amendment.
- Prescribes timelines for implementation.

Except as otherwise specified in the act, these provisions became law upon approval by the Governor on May 2, 2025.
Vote: Senate 28-9; House 81-30

Committee on Finance and Tax

HB 7031 — Taxation

By Ways & Means Committee and Rep. Duggan and others

The bill contains provisions for tax relief and changes to tax policy.

Sales Tax

The bill:

- Repeals the "business rent tax" beginning October 1, 2025.
- Creates a permanent Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday each year for the entire month of August.
- Permanently exempts the following items:
  - AA-cell, AAA-cell, C-cell, D-cell, 6-volt, or 9-volt batteries.
  - Fire extinguishers, smoke detectors or smoke alarms, and carbon monoxide detectors.
  - Certain portable generators.
  - Waterproof tarpaulins and other flexible waterproof sheeting 1,000 square feet or less.
  - Ground anchor systems and tie-down kits.
  - Five gallon or less gas or diesel fuel cans.
  - All bicycle helmets (currently only youth helmets are exempt).
  - Sunscreen, insect repellant, and life jackets.
  - Admission to Florida State Parks.
- Provides a sales tax holiday for hunting, fishing, and camping equipment from September 8, 2025, through December 31, 2025.
- Exempts all sales of gold, silver, and platinum bullion regardless of the sales price (currently sales with a price below $500 are taxable).
- Exempts NASCAR Championship Race tickets from the tax on admissions.
- Extends the deadline to receive the data center sales tax exemption certificate from June 30, 2027, to June 30, 2037, and increases the megawatts (MW) required to qualify for the certificate from 15 MW to 100 MW.
- Clarifies that a forwarding agent already registered as a sales tax dealer with the Department of Revenue is not required to resubmit a dealer application when applying for or renewing a forwarding agent certificate. It also prohibits dealers from charging sales tax on tangible personal property shipped to a forwarding agent.

Property Tax

The bill:

- Directs the Office of Economic and Demographic Research (EDR) to study the state's property tax system and submit a report that provides policy options to the Legislature by November 1, 2025. The bill appropriates $1 million of nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund to EDR to complete the study.

- Appropriates $500,000 from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of Revenue to reimburse fiscally constrained counties for refunds made to owners of damaged and uninhabitable residential properties in 2024.
- Includes the following expansions or creations of new exemptions for affordable housing, which apply beginning with the 2026 tax rolls:
  - The exemption for land leased by a nonprofit for affordable housing for at least 99 years is expanded to include property leased from a local housing finance authority and land leased and assigned or subleased from a nonprofit to certain persons or families.
  - The exemption for multifamily affordable housing that requires a land use restriction agreement lasting at least 99 years is expanded to include property leased from a local housing finance authority.
  - An exemption is created for recently constructed multifamily affordable housing of at least 70 units which is on government property that is leased for at least 30 years.
  - An exemption is created for new multifamily affordable housing of at least 70 units which is on state-owned property that is leased for at least 60 years. This exemption expires December 31, 2061.
  - Eligibility to receive a property tax exemption for multifamily affordable housing constructed or rehabilitated within 5 years from the date of first application is expanded to allow successive owners of the property to apply for the exemption.
- Beginning January 1, 2026, provides that flight simulators shall be deemed owned by a governmental unit and not a lessee if the simulator reverts to the governmental unit upon expiration of a lease.
- Expands the educational property tax exemption to include gold seal certified childcare facilities if the gold seal facility is responsible for the payment of property taxes under the terms of the facility's lease.
- Beginning January 1, 2026, allows a petitioner to a value adjustment board to appear telephonically, by video conference, or other electronic means, unless a county with a population of less than 75,000 opts out.
- Beginning January 1, 2026, allows a taxpayer to file an appeal within 30 days of the tax roll's recertification if the tax roll has been extended.
- Beginning September 1, 2025, requires property appraisers to provide evidence to taxpayers at least 15 days before a value adjustment board hearing.
- Authorizes the value adjustment board to adopt a filing fee of up to $50, instead of $15.
- Provides for citrus packinghouse and processor equipment to be assessed at salvage value for the 2025 tangible personal property tax roll if the property owner applies for such assessment by August 1, 2025, and the property is no longer used in the operations due to citrus greening.
- Extends the agricultural classification for agricultural properties affected by citrus greening or other state or federal quarantine programs from 5 years to 10 years after execution of an agreement with the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services or federal agency, as applicable.

Local Taxes

The bill:

- Extends the current freeze on rate increases for local communications services tax (CST) from January 1, 2026, to January 1, 2031.
- Requires local governments to prioritize the use of local CST revenue for the timely review, processing, and approval of permit applications for the use of rights-of-way by providers.
- Allows fiscally constrained counties adjacent to the Gulf of America or the Atlantic Ocean to use tourist development tax (TDT) revenues for public facilities.
- Allows all counties adjacent to the Gulf of America or the Atlantic Ocean to use TDT revenues for beach lifeguards.
- Allows counties and school boards to reduce or repeal certain local discretionary sales surtaxes in effect by a two-thirds vote.
- Extends the timeframe for local incentive program benefits in enterprise zones to continue from December 31, 2025, to December 31, 2035, for multi-phase projects that vested on or before December 31, 2021.

Corporate Income Tax

The bill:

- Excludes charitable trusts from the definition of "corporation" for purposes of the state's corporate income tax.
- Adopts the Internal Revenue Code in effect on January 1, 2025, to maintain conformity with federal provisions.

Fuel Taxes

The bill:

- Repeals the aviation fuel tax beginning January 1, 2026.
- Delays the imposition of the tax on natural gas fuel from January 1, 2026, to January 1, 2030.

Multiple Taxes

The bill:

- Creates the Home Away from Home Tax Credit program to provide $13 million in annual tax credits to Florida businesses that contribute to charitable organizations that house families of critically ill children at little or no cost to the family while traveling so the child can receive care. Credits can be applied to corporate income, insurance premium, or beverage taxes. The bill appropriates $155,282 of nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of Revenue to implement the tax credit.

- Creates the Rural Communities Investment Program to allow investors to earn a total of $7 million in annual tax credits against the corporate income or insurance premium tax by investing in a rural fund. The program is capped at $35 million over five years.
- Amends the Strong Families Tax Credit program to clarify that the charitable organization only must submit an IRS Form 990 if it was required to file the form with the IRS.

Pari-mutuel Taxes

The bill:

- Clarifies the live racing requirements for the 0.5 percent applicable tax rate on handle for intertrack wagering.
- Eliminates the slot machine licensing fee for thoroughbred permitholders.
- Reduces the cardroom tax rate from 10 percent to 8 percent.

Miscellaneous

The bill:

- Increases the amount of beverage tax distributions made to the University of Miami Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center ($10 million to $20 million total); Mayo Clinic Comprehensive Cancer Center ($10 million to $20 million total); University of Florida Health Shands Cancer Center Brain Tumor Immunotherapy Program ($5 million to $10 million total); and University of Florida Norman Fixel Institute for Neurological Diseases ($5 million to $10 million total).
- Amends the Department of Revenue's pre-audit preparation process and clarifies administration of overpayment of taxes.
- Redirects the $5 million distribution from the Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' Association, Inc. (FTBA) to Tampa Bay Downs, Inc. ($500,000 to $1.5 million total) and Gulfstream Park Racing Association, Inc. ($2 million to $6 million total) for purses or purse-supplements and repeals references to the association.
- Revises distributions from documentary stamp tax revenues to:
  - Eliminate the distribution for the New Starts Transit Program and the Florida Rail Enterprise.
  - Eliminate the $150 million distribution to the State Housing Trust Fund created in the Live Local Act beginning July 1, 2025, rather than expiring July 1, 2033. Other housing trust fund distributions are unaffected.
  - Reapply the general revenue service charge to all taxes collected beginning July 1, 2025, rather than July 1, 2033.
- Adds the data center sales tax exemption certificate and the Rural Communities Investment Program to the reporting cycles for economic development programs evaluation of the Office of Economic and Demographic Research and the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability.
- Makes other technical and conforming changes.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025, except as otherwise provided.
Vote: Senate 32-2; House 93-7

Committee on Governmental Oversight and Accountability

CS/SB 108 — Administrative Procedures

by Rules Committee and Senators Grall, Burgess, and Avila

The bill amends the Administrative Procedure Act's rulemaking process to provide for additional public input and transparency. The bill also:

- Mandates that an agency conduct a review of all of its existing rules over the next five years. The review must examine the rule's consistency with the powers and duties granted by the agency's enabling statutes and for any need for update.
- Requires a review during the fifth year of each new rule adopted after July 1, 2025. This review mimics the existing rule review described above.
- Requires an agency to file a notice of rule development within 30 days of legislation mandating rulemaking, and to file a notice of proposed rule within 180 days thereafter. If the agency fails to meet this timeframe, and does not file an extension notice with the Joint Administrative Procedures Committee (JAPC), then it must withdraw the rule and begin rulemaking again.
- Requires at least seven days between the publications of a notice of rule development and a notice of proposed rule to allow for better public notice during rulemaking.
- Requires any material incorporated by reference to be published with the notice of proposed rule, made available in an electronic searchable format, and coded with underlining and strike-throughs to make it easier to determine changes made to its text.
- Requires that the full text of emergency rules be published in the Florida Administrative Code.
- Provides for additional public input in the statement of estimated regulatory cost (SERC) by allowing an individual to request a SERC workshop.
- Supplements the agency evaluation of transactional costs and market impacts in its creation of a SERC by providing specific examples of such costs and impacts.
- Prohibits the sunset or repeal of a rule by its own terms, unless specifically provided for in the underlying statute that provides authority to adopt the rule.
- Requires an agency to withdraw a rule that was not ratified by the Legislature within one regular legislative session after its referral to the body. If an underlying mandatory delegation of rulemaking authority persists at the time the agency withdraws the rule, then the agency must reinitiate rulemaking within 90 days of adjournment sine die.
- Requires each agency to publish specific licensing data in its annual agency regulatory plan.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 111-0

Committee on Governmental Oversight and Accountability

HB 259 — Special Observances

by Rep. Gerwig and others (SB 214 by Senator Polsky)

The bill designates August 21 of each year as "Fentanyl Awareness and Education Day" to increase awareness of the dangers of fentanyl and potential overdoses.

The bill encourages specific state agencies, local governments, public schools, and other agencies to sponsor events to promote awareness of fentanyl's dangers, community resources for drug prevention, and substance use and abuse generally.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 106-0

Committee on Governmental Oversight and Accountability

CS/CS/SB 268 — Public Records/Congressional Members and Public Officers

by Community Affairs Committee; Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee; and Senators Jones and Brodeur

The bill exempts from public records copying and inspection requirements the partial home addresses and telephone numbers of certain public officers, as well as their spouses and adult children; and the names, home addresses, telephone numbers, and dates of birth of their minor children, if any, as well as the names and locations of the school or day care facility said children attend. The exemption repeals on October 2, 2030, unless reviewed and saved by the Legislature.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 34-2; House 113-2

Committee on Governmental Oversight and Accountability

CS/HB 549 — Gulf of America

by Education & Employment Committee and Rep. Porras and others (CS/SB 1058 by Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee and Senators Gruters and Avila)

The bill (Chapter 2025-7, L.O.F.) reflects the federal designation of the "Gulf of Mexico" as the "Gulf of America." Under the bill, each state agency must change references to the "Gulf of Mexico" in geographic materials to the "Gulf of America." Similarly, starting on July 1, 2025, public and charter schools may only acquire instructional and library materials using the term "Gulf of America," as opposed to the "Gulf of Mexico."

These provisions were approved by the Governor and take effect on July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 28-9; House 78-29

Committee on Governmental Oversight and Accountability

CS/HB 677 — State Group Insurance Program Coverage of Standard Fertility Preservation Services

by Health & Human Services Committee and Rep. Trabulsy (CS/CS/SB 924 by Banking and Insurance Committee; Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee; and Senators Calatayud and Sharief)

The bill requires health insurance plans issued on or after January 1, 2026, for the State Group Insurance Program to cover standard fertility retrieval and preservation services for covered individuals undergoing medically necessary cancer treatments that may cause iatrogenic infertility. The bill prohibits a state group health insurance plan from imposing any preauthorization requirements but allows copayments, deductibles, and coinsurance.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 32-4; House 115-0

Committee on Governmental Oversight and Accountability

CS/HB 751 — Law Enforcement, Correctional, and Correctional Probation Officer Benefits

by State Affairs Committee and Reps. Sapp, Bartleman, and others (CS/SB 1160 by Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee and Senators Leek and Pizzo)

The bill creates the "Deputy Andy Lehera Act," to expand employer-paid health insurance benefits to a law enforcement, correction, or correctional probation officer catastrophically injured during an official training exercise or in the line of duty. The coverage includes the injured full-time officer and his or her spouse and dependent children.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 111-0

Committee on Governmental Oversight and Accountability

CS/HB 1445 — Public Officers and Employees

by State Affairs Committee and Rep. Mayfield and others (CS/CS/SB 1760 by Rules Committee; Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government; and Senator Grall)

The bill establishes specific U.S. citizenship and Florida residency requirements for state executive branch officers; prohibits the reimbursement of travel expenses for certain executive branch officers when travelling between the officer's headquarters and permanent residence; prohibits certain gifts being given to certain water management district officers; prohibits certain political activities of state, county and municipal officers and employees; establishes statutory criteria to consider when determining whether a position is an "office" subject to the constitutional dual office-holding restrictions; and enumerates certain positions that are deemed to be "offices."

Beginning October 1, 2025, the following state officers must maintain U.S. citizenship and Florida residency throughout the term of office:

- The secretary of a department (this includes most executive branch secretaries, except the departments of Legal Affairs; Financial Services; Agriculture and Consumer Services; and those departments noted below);
- The executive director of a department (this includes the executive directors of the departments of Revenue; Law Enforcement; Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles; Veterans' Affairs; Elderly Affairs; and Citrus; the executive director of the State Board of Administration; the Commissioner of Education; and the Adjutant General of the Department of Military Affairs);
- The chief administrative officer of any unit of state government housed under a department for administrative purposes but not subject to control by the department (this includes, but is not limited to, the executive directors of the Florida Gaming Control Commission; Florida Transportation Commission; Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; the director of the Agency for Persons with Disabilities; the Commissioner of Insurance Regulation; and the Commissioner of Financial Regulation, the Chief Judge of the Division of Administrative Hearings, the executive director of the Human Relations Commission, and the chair of the Public Employees Relations Commission);
- A member of a commission;
- A member of a licensing board;
- The chair of a governing board, or the chief executive of a statewide entity statutorily created for a public purpose or to carry out a government program, and that is not under the direct control of a governmental entity; and
- Any other appointee to state office in the executive branch.

Effective January 6, 2027, the bill requires:

- A member of a state university board of trustees to be a U.S. citizen and either a Florida resident or a graduate of the state university, the administration of which is overseen by such board of trustees.

- A member of the Board of Governors to be a U.S. citizen and either a Florida resident or a graduate of a [Florida] state university.

The office of an individual that does not meet the applicable residency and citizenship requirements under the bill is deemed vacant *automatically* (rather than upon the Governor filing an executive order with the Secretary of State).

The bill prohibits the payment of travel expenses for a department secretary, department executive director, or a chief administrative officer of another state entity when the person travels between the department's official headquarters (or assigned post) and the officer's permanent residence.

The bill prohibits an officer or employee of the state, a county or a municipality from using his or her official authority or influence to directly or indirectly coerce, or to attempt to coerce, command, solicit or advise any other person (rather than another officer or employee) to contribute anything of value to any political party, candidate for public office, political committee, organization, agency or person. The bill also eliminates the exemption that permitted officials appointed as the heads or directors of state administrative agencies, boards, commissions, or committees to engage in certain political activities. An employee of the state or any political subdivision, while on duty, is prohibited from participating in any political campaign (rather than only a campaign relating to an elective office).

The bill prohibits a lobbyist or principal of a lobbyist on matters before water management districts from providing, directly or indirectly, anything of value to a water management district governing board member, an executive director, or an employee who qualifies as a local officer for the purpose of lobbying. Likewise, a member of the governing board, the executive director, or any employee who qualifies as a local officer of a water management district is prohibited from knowingly accepting, directly or indirectly, anything of value made by a lobbyist or principal for the purpose of lobbying.

The bill statutorily defines the term "office" for purposes of the constitutional restriction on dual office-holding in Florida. The term "office" is defined to mean any position in state, county, or municipal government that:

- Delegates to the individual holding the position a portion of sovereign power of the government;
- Requires the exercise of independent governmental authority performed in an official capacity rather than solely based upon a contractual or employment relationship;
- Has a prescribed tenure; and
- Exists independently of the individual holding the position.

The following offices are enumerated as positions that meet the definition of "office":

- Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Cabinet officers;
- State senator and state representative;

- County commissioner, sheriff, tax collector, property appraiser, supervisor of elections, and clerk of circuit court;
- Member of the Board of Governors of the State University System;
- Member of a board of trustees for a state university;
- Member of a district school board;
- Member of a state, county, or municipal board or commission that exercises governmental authority and is not purely advisory in nature;
- Member of the Board of Governors for the Citizens Property Insurance Corporation;
- Member of the board of directors for the Florida Housing Finance Corporation;
- Member of the board of directors for the Florida Healthy Kids Corporation, other than the member nominated by the Florida Association of Counties and appointed by the Chief Financial Officer;
- Administrator or manager of a county, a municipality, certain state corporations or the director of a county or municipal emergency management agency who exercises in his or her own right any sovereign power or any prescribed independent authority of a government nature;
- State, county, or municipal law enforcement officer with the authority to arrest without a warrant; and
- Any position that meets all criteria enumerated above for determining an "office."

The bill exempts ex officio designations and employment positions from the definition of "office." The bill defines "employment" to mean a relationship with a state, county, or municipal government where an individual *does not* exercise in his or her own right any sovereign power or any prescribed individual authority of a governmental nature.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 97-1

Committee on Governmental Oversight and Accountability

CS/CS/SB 1678 — Entities that Boycott Israel

by Appropriations Committee; Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee; and Senators Leek, Martin, Ingoglia, and Rodriguez

The bill expands prohibitions on public entities' engagements with companies that boycott Israel. Specifically, it:

- Expands the definition of a "boycott of Israel" to include an academic boycott of Israel in which an educational institution (or any of its departments, centers, or other organs) enacts or implements restrictive policies or participates in activities that restrict an ongoing or a potential academic relationship on the basis of ties to Israel or its academic, educational, or research institutions.
- Requires that the State Board of Administration (SBA), on behalf of the Florida Retirement System Pension Plan, divest from companies *and other entities* (including educational institutions and foreign governments) that engage in a boycott of Israel.
- Requires the SBA to determine the companies and other entities that boycott Israel in which it has an ownership interest and which should be placed on the Scrutinized Companies or Other Entities that Boycott Israel List (List).
- Requires that the endowment and retirement funds of universities of the State University System divest from companies and other entities that engage in a boycott of Israel.
- Requires an applicant for the Department of State's arts and culture grants to certify that it will comply with all relevant anti-discrimination laws and will not engage in antisemitic discrimination or speech in conjunction with its grant project and provides penalties for such a violation.
- Requires the Department of Management Services to work with the SBA to determine those companies or entities on the List that currently contract with the state pursuant to ch. 287, F.S., or that have a state arts and cultural grant agreement.
- Allows a company or entity that is on the List to contract with state agencies and local governments for up to $100,000 per contract. Previously, such companies were totally barred.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 34-2; House 111-3

Committee on Governmental Oversight and Accountability

SB 7020 — OGSR/Agency Cybersecurity Information

by Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee and Senator DiCeglie

The bill aligns the scheduled repeal dates for specified cybersecurity related public record and public meeting exemptions to allow for a simultaneous review. Specifically, the bill delays for one year (from October 2, 2025 to October 2, 2026) the repeal date of the exemption in s. 282.318(5), F.S., which makes confidential and exempt from public inspection and copying requirements the portions of risk assessments, evaluations, external audits, and other reports of a state agency cybersecurity program for the data, information, and state agency IT resources which are held by the state agency, if the disclosure of such portions of records would facilitate the unauthorized access to, or the unauthorized modification, disclosure, or destruction of:

- Data or information, whether physical or virtual; or
- IT resources, which include:
  - Information relating to the security of the agency's technologies, processes, and practices designed to protect networks, computers, data processing software, and data from attack, damage, or unauthorized access; or
  - Security information, whether physical or virtual, which relates to the agency's existing or proposed IT systems.

The bill also delays from repeal the current public meetings exemption for any portion of a meeting that would reveal the information described above.

The bill moves up by one year (from October 2, 2027 to October 2, 2026) the sunset review date for, and repeal of, the public record and public meeting exemption codified in s. 119.0725(2) and (3), F.S. This general cybersecurity public record and public meeting exemption makes confidential and exempt from public inspection and copying requirements the following information held by an agency before, on, or after July 1, 2022:

- Coverage limits and deductible or self-insurance amounts of insurance or other risk mitigation coverages acquired for the protection of IT systems, operational technology systems, or data of an agency.
- Information relating to critical infrastructure.
- Cybersecurity incident information that is reported by a state agency or local government pursuant to ss. 282.318 or 282.3185, F.S.
- Network schematics, hardware and software configurations, or encryption information or information that identifies detection, investigation, or response practices for suspected or confirmed cybersecurity incidents.

Any portion of a public meeting that would reveal the above confidential and exempt information is closed to the public and exempt from public meeting laws.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 116-0

Committee on Governmental Oversight and Accountability

SB 7022 — Retirement

by Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee and Senators DiCeglie and Hooper

The bill establishes the contribution rates paid by employers that participate in the Florida Retirement System (FRS) beginning July 1, 2025. These rates are intended to fund the full normal cost and the amortization of the unfunded actuarial liability of the FRS. The 3 percent employee contribution rate is not changed by this bill.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 34-0; House 105-0

Committee on Health Policy

CS/HB 519 — Administration of Controlled Substances by Paramedics

by Health Professions & Programs Subcommittee and Reps. Bartleman, Melo, and others
(CS/SB 1224 by Health Policy Committee and Senator Harrell)

The bill amends s. 893.05, F.S., to allow a health care practitioner who is specified as an authorized prescriber of controlled substances, to cause a controlled substance to be administered, under his or her direction and supervision only, by a certified paramedic in the course of providing emergency services.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 108-0

Committee on Health Policy

CS/HB 547 — Medical Debt

by Health Care Facilities & Systems Subcommittee and Rep. Partington (CS/CS/SB 656 by Rules Committee; Health Policy Committee; and Senator Rodriguez)

The bill amends billing and collection activities of hospitals and ambulatory surgical centers (ASC) in s. 395.3011, F.S., to:

- Expand the scope of "extraordinary collection action" to include actions taken in relation to obtaining payment for any bill of care, rather than only bills of care that are covered under a hospital's or ASC's financial assistance policy.
- Allow a hospital or ASC to sell a patient's debt without the 30-day notice to the patient as required under current law if the debt:
  - Is not subject to interest or fees and the purchaser of the debt does not take any other extraordinary collection actions that the hospital or ASC could otherwise take; and
  - Is returned to the facility if the debt buyer determines that the debt qualifies for charity care under the facility's financial assistance policy.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 38-0; House 116-0

Committee on Health Policy

CS/HB 647 — Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Services

by Health Professions & Programs Subcommittee and Rep. Trabulsy and others (CS/SB 998 by Health Policy Committee and Senator Calatayud)

The bill provides that, in the absence of a funeral director, an advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) providing hospice care pursuant to a written protocol with a licensed physician may file a certificate of death or fetal death. The bill authorizes such an APRN to certify the cause of death and correct information on a permanent certificate of death or fetal death.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 38-0; House 111-0

Committee on Health Policy

CS/CS/SB 768 — Foreign Countries of Concern

by Judiciary Committee; Health Policy Committee; and Senator Calatayud

The bill prohibits Florida's public health laboratories from using operational or research software used for genetic sequencing that is produced in or by a foreign country of concern, a state-owned enterprise of a foreign country of concern, or a company domiciled within a foreign country of concern. Foreign countries of concern include China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, Cuba, the Venezuelan regime of Nicolas Maduro, and Syria. Scrutinized companies may include those that boycott Israel or have prohibited operations in Cuba, Iran, Sudan, or Syria.

Preexisting law requires AHCA licensees (health care facilities and providers) to ensure that a person or entity possessing a controlling interest in the licensee does not also hold, either directly or indirectly, regardless of ownership structure, an interest in an entity that has a business relationship with a foreign country of concern or that is subject to s. 287.135, F.S., prohibiting contracting with scrutinized companies. The bill provides that a licensee's failure to obtain assurances to ensure compliance with this requirement will no longer affect licensure or insurability, nor will it subject the licensee to civil or criminal liability, unless the licensee has actual knowledge that an indirect interest holder is a principal from a foreign country of concern and is not in compliance with the minimum licensure requirements. The bill also defines the term "indirect interest holder" as a person owning less than a five-percent interest in the licensee, generally.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 114-0

Committee on Health Policy

CS/CS/HB 791 — Surrendered Infants

by Health & Human Services Committee; Health Care Facilities & Systems Subcommittee; and Rep. Cobb and others (SB 1690 by Senator McClain)

The bill (Chapter 2025-17, L.O.F.) statutory provisions relating to surrendered infants, revising the definition of "infant" and defining "infant safety device."

The bill provides an additional method of lawful surrender by authorizing a hospital, an emergency medical services (EMS) station, or a fire station that is staffed 24 hours per day to use a qualifying infant safety device in order to accept surrendered infants.

The bill requires a hospital, an EMS station, or a fire station that uses an infant safety device to use the device's surveillance system to monitor the inside of the infant safety device 24 hours per day, to physically check the device at least twice daily, and to test the device at least weekly to ensure the alarm system is in working order.

The bill requires that a participating fire station must use the dual alarm system of the infant safety device to dispatch immediately the nearest first responder to retrieve any infant left in the infant safety device in the case that all firefighter first responders are dispatched from the fire station for an emergency.

Existing provisions related to the presumption that the parent intended to surrender the infant, consented to appropriate medical treatment and care, and to termination of parental rights; the care and custodial processing of an infant upon lawful surrender; and the parent's anonymity upon surrender, are extended by the bill to occasions when infants are surrendered in an infant safety device.

Lastly, the bill further provides technical and conforming changes, such as utilizing the term "surrendered" instead of "left," or "child" instead of "minor."

These provisions were approved by the Governor and take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 33-4; House 106-0

Committee on Health Policy

CS/CS/SB 958 — Type 1 Diabetes Early Detection Program

by Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services; Health Policy Committee; and Senator Bernard

The bill requires the Department of Health (DOH), in collaboration with school districts throughout the state, to develop Type 1 diabetes informational materials for the parents and guardians of students. Within 90 days after July 1, 2025, the DOH must develop materials related to the early detection of Type 1 diabetes and post the materials on its website to be available to each early learning coalition, school district, and charter school.

The bill requires the DOH to develop a standardized methodology for each early learning coalition, school district, and charter school for the notification of the parents or guardians of voluntary prekindergarten, kindergarten, and first-grade students. Parents and guardians must be notified of the availability of the Type 1 diabetes early detection materials by September 30, 2025, and annually thereafter.

The bill also requires the informational materials on Tyle 1 diabetes to include, at minimum:

- A description of Type 1 diabetes.
- A description of the risk factors and warning signs associated with Type 1 diabetes.
- A description of the process for screening students for early detection of Type 1 diabetes using a blood autoantibody test.
- A recommendation for further evaluation for students displaying warning signs associated with Type 1 diabetes or positive early detection screening results.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 115-0

Committee on Health Policy

CS/CS/HB 1089 — Newborn Screenings

by Health & Human Services Committee; Health Care Budget Subcommittee; and Reps. Booth, Anderson, and others (CS/SB 524 by Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services and Senator Harrell)

The bill requires, subject to legislative appropriation, the Florida Department of Health to adopt and enforce rules requiring every newborn in the state to be screened for Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy at the appropriate age, beginning January 1, 2027.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 115-0

Committee on Health Policy

CS/CS/SB 1156 — Home Health Aide for Medically Fragile Children Program

by Fiscal Policy Committee; Health Policy Committee; and Senators Harrell and Sharief

The bill amends laws relating to the Home Health Aide for Medically Fragile Children (HHAMFC) program. Specifically, the bill:

- Specifies that the HHAMFC must complete an approved training program and the employing home health agency must provide validation of the HHAMFC prior to the aide providing services to an eligible relative. The employing home health agency must also provide training on HIV/AIDS and ensure that the HHAMFC holds and maintains a certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
- Specifies that the training program must consist of at least 76 total hours of training with at least 40 hours of home health aide training, 20 hours of skills training tailored to the needs of the child, 16 hours of clinical training related to the child's needs, and training on HIV infections and CPR.
- Increases the Medicaid utilization cap from eight hours per day to 12 hours per day.
- Provides that the $25 per hour Medicaid reimbursement rate is a minimum rate.
- Requires the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) to seek federal approval to allow providers to receive reimbursement under the program and to disregard the income earned by a HHAMFC from the program when calculating eligibility for Medicaid.
- Requires Medicaid managed care plans to provide the AHCA with data necessary to assess the rate and extent of hospitalizations for children attended by HHAMFCs compared with those attended by a registered nurse or licensed practical nurse.
- Requires home health agencies to report an adverse incident within 48 hours of the incident, defines the term "adverse incident," and requires the AHCA to include data on adverse incidents occurring under the care of a HHAMFC in its required annual assessment of the HHAMFC program.
- Requires the AHCA to make all necessary requests and submissions to obtain federal approval and initiate any necessary rulemaking within 60 days of the act becoming law.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 113-0

Committee on Health Policy

CS/HB 1195 — Fentanyl Testing

by Health Care Facilities & Systems Subcommittee and Reps. Harris, Bankson, and others (CS/CS/SB 1346 by Judiciary Committee; Health Policy Committee; and Senators Polsky, Pizzo, and Berman)

The bill (Chapter 2025-19, L.O.F.) creates "Gage's Law" to require a hospital or hospital-based off-campus emergency department treating an individual with emergency services and care to include testing for fentanyl if the hospital conducts a urine drug test to assist in diagnosing the individual's condition. If the urine test is positive for fentanyl, the hospital must conduct a confirmation test. Additionally, the hospital must retain the results of the urine test and the confirmation test in the patient's clinical record pursuant to the hospital's record keeping practice.

These provisions were approved by the Governor and take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 114-0

Committee on Health Policy

CS/CS/HB 1299 — Department of Health

by Health & Human Services Committee; Health Professions & Programs Subcommittee; and Rep. Yarkosky and others (CS/CS/CS/SB 1270 by Rules Committee; Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services; Health Policy Committee; and Senator Collins)

The bill postpones until June 1, 2027, the scheduled repeal of the statutory definition of "messenger ribonucleic acid vaccine" (mRNA vaccine) to maintain statutory prohibitions against discrimination based on knowledge or belief of a person's status relating to vaccination with any mRNA vaccine, including by governmental entities, business establishments, and educational institutions.

The bill defines "owner," "manager," and "employee" for purposes of background screening requirements applicable to medical marijuana treatment centers (MMTCs) and certified marijuana testing laboratories. The bill requires MMTCs to report any actual or attempted theft, diversion, or loss of marijuana to local law enforcement and to notify the Department of Health (DOH) by email.

The bill revises the Mobile Opportunity by Interstate Licensure Endorsement (MOBILE) Act by reducing the required duration of active practice for licensure-by-endorsement applicants from three years to two. It also establishes that reported conduct in the National Practitioner Data Bank does not disqualify an applicant from licensure under the MOBILE Act if the reported conduct would not constitute a violation of Florida law or rule. In such cases, the bill authorizes the applicable regulatory board, or the DOH if there is no board, to approve the application, approve it with restrictions or conditions, or deny it.

The bill updates the term "American Association of Physician Specialists" with the name of its official certifying body "American Board of Physician Specialties" in several different statutes relating to controlled substance prescribing, pain management clinics, and anesthesiologist assistants.

The bill modifies active practice requirements for the licensure of allopathic physicians by endorsement to provide that out-of-state applicants who would have satisfied the active practice requirements before the MOBILE Act's adoption can continue to become licensed in Florida as M.D.s.

The bill revises the list of institutions at which the DOH is authorized to issue a medical faculty certificate to an individual who has been offered and has accepted a full-time faculty appointment to include Orlando College of Osteopathic Medicine, Lincoln Memorial University-DeBusk College of Osteopathic Medicine in Orange Park, Florida, and Loma Linda University School of Medicine - AdventHealth in Orlando, Florida.

The bill revises criteria for the issuance of temporary certificates for practice in areas of critical need by allopathic and osteopathic physician assistants. Under the bill, such temporary

certificates are limited to physician assistants who are licensed in a U.S. state or the District of Columbia, thereby excluding those licensed only in U.S. territories.

The bill corrects one material deviation and conforms provisions of the Physical Therapy Licensure Compact to the model language by defining the term "party state."

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025, except for the provisions relating to mRNA vaccine which take effect upon the act becoming a law.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 113-0

Committee on Health Policy

CS/HB 1353 — Home Health Care Services

by Health & Human Services Committee and Rep. Franklin and others (SB 1412 by Senator Calatayud)

The bill:

- Allows one administrator to manage up to five home health agencies (HHA) regardless of their location as long as the HHAs have identical controlling interests;
- Allows initial visits, service evaluation visits, and discharge visits to be conducted by individuals under contract with the HHA, as opposed to only by a direct employee of the HHA as under preexisting law; and
- Revises the requirements to participate in the "Excellence in Home Health Program" to allow all types of HHAs to participate regardless of payor type, patient population, or service designation.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 115-0

Committee on Health Policy

CS/CS/CS/HB 1421 — Improving Screening for and Treatment of Blood Clots

By Health & Human Services Committee; Health Care Budget Subcommittee; Health Professions & Programs Subcommittee; and Rep. Black and others (CS/CS/SB 890 by Fiscal Policy Committee; Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services; and Senators Yarborough, Berman, Gruters, and Rouson)

The bill creates the Emily Adkins Family Protection Act to improve screening for and treatment of blood clots. Specifically, the bill:

- Specifies that chronic critical illness and genetic predisposition for developing venous thromboembolisms (VTE) are chronic diseases.
- Requires specified training and protocols to assess and treat patients at risk of VTE when the patient is admitted to a hospital that has an emergency department or an ambulatory surgical center (ASC).
- Requires the Department of Health to contract with a private entity to establish and maintain a statewide VTE registry.
- Requires the Agency for Health Care Administration to provide a report to the Governor and the Legislature on the incidence of VTE.
- Requires each hospital that has an emergency department and each ASC to report certain information to the registry.
- Requires certified nursing assistants, when employed by a nursing home facility for a 12-month period or longer, to receive training on recognizing the signs and symptoms of VTE and techniques for providing an emergency response.
- Requires assisted living facilities to provide a pamphlet to residents upon admission containing information on VTE.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 110-0

Committee on Health Policy

CS/HB 1427 — Nursing Education Programs

by Health & Human Services Committee and Reps. Griffitts, Abbott, and others (CS/SB 1568 by Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services and Senator Brodeur)

The bill establishes new requirements for nursing education programs seeking approval from the Board of Nursing (Board). These requirements include the adoption of standardized evaluation and admission criteria, the implementation of a comprehensive exit exam designed to prepare students for the National Council of State Boards of Nursing Licensing Examination (NCLEX), and the development of a remediation program.

The bill authorizes the Board to consider adverse actions taken against a nursing education program in another U.S. jurisdiction. It also requires program directors to notify the Board within 15 days of any such action. In response, the Board may approve the application, approve it with conditions, or deny it. However, the Board must deny an application if another U.S. regulatory body has terminated or revoked the applicant's authority to operate a nursing education program.

Program directors are subject to professional discipline relating to their nursing licenses under the bill if they fail to submit an annual report by November 1, or if they fail to appear before the Board and present a remediation plan within six months after the program has been placed on probation.

If an approved program's graduate NCLEX passage rate falls below 30 percent in a calendar year, the program must reimburse the full amount of tuition and fees paid by each student who failed to pass the NCLEX on their first attempt during that year.

The bill also authorizes the Department of Health to conduct onsite inspections at all regular hours of operation to ensure program compliance.

Additionally, the bill reduces the timeframe in which a nursing education program can fail to meet statutory requirements before being placed on probation, from two years to one year. It also shortens the maximum probationary period from three years to two years.

Finally, the bill removes the Board's authority to extend the deadline for professional nursing education programs to obtain accreditation.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 26-5; House 99-0

Committee on Health Policy

CS/CS/SB 1490 — Children's Medical Services Program

by Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services; Health Policy Committee; and Senator Harrell

The bill transfers the operation of the Children's Medical Services (CMS) Managed Care Plan from the Department of Health (DOH) to the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA); however, the DOH will retain responsibility for clinical eligibility determinations and must provide ongoing consultation to the AHCA on services to children and youth with special health care needs.

The bill requires the AHCA to establish specific measures of access, quality, and costs of providing health care services to children and youth with special health care needs. The AHCA must contract with an independent evaluator to conduct an evaluation of the services provided, which must be submitted to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by January 15, 2028.

The bill repeals provisions related to the administration of CMS, as well as provisions that clarify instances in which it is not a standards of conduct violation for a physician who is involved with the DOH under certain circumstances to also be employed by the DOH to provide CMS services or services to assist in proceedings related to children.

The bill eliminates the Statewide CMS Network Advisory Council and CMS program technical advisory panels.

The bill also requires the AHCA to develop a plan to redesign the Florida Medicaid Model Waiver for home and community-based services to include children who receive private duty nursing services. The AHCA must submit a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by December 31, 2025, detailing certain aspects of the waiver redesign.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, the bill takes effect upon becoming a law, except as otherwise expressly provided.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 112-0

Committee on Health Policy

CS/CS/HB 1545 — Parkinson's Disease

by Health Care Budget Subcommittee; Health Professions & Programs Subcommittee; and Rep. Busatta (CS/CS/SB 1800 by Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services; Health Policy Committee; and Senators Calatayud and Rouson)

The bill establishes the Florida Institute for Parkinson's Disease at the University of South Florida as a statewide resource for Parkinson's disease research and clinical care. The purpose of the institute is to find a cure for Parkinson's disease and to improve the quality of life and health outcomes for those affected by Parkinson's disease by advancing knowledge, diagnosis, and treatment of Parkinson's disease through research, clinical care, education, and advocacy.

The bill also establishes the Parkinson's Disease Research Board (Board) and the Consortium for Parkinson's Disease Research (Consortium) within the University of South Florida. The Board is established to direct the operations of the Consortium, and the Consortium, which will consist of public and private universities and academic medical centers, is created to conduct rigorous scientific research and disseminate such research.

The bill requires the Board to adopt a plan for Parkinson's disease research annually and to award funds to members of the Consortium to perform research consistent with the plan. The Board must issue a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives on research projects, research findings, community outreach initiatives, and future plans for the Consortium by October 15 of each year.

Implementation of the bill's provisions relating to the Consortium and the Board is subject to legislative appropriation for such purpose contained in the annual General Appropriations Act.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 38-0; House 112-0

Committee on Health Policy

CS/CS/SB 1546 — Background Screening of Athletic Coaches

by Rules Committee; Criminal Justice Committee; and Senator Grall

The bill amends s. 943.0438, F.S., to extend the implementation date for the requirement that current and prospective athletic coaches must pass a Level II background screening from January 1, 2025, to July 1, 2026.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 115-0

Committee on Health Policy

CS/CS/SB 1768 — Stem Cell Therapy

by Rules Committee; Health Policy Committee; and Senator Trumbull

The bill authorizes licensed physicians (medical doctors and doctors of osteopathic medicine) to perform stem cell therapies that have not been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), specifically for orthopedic conditions, wound care, or pain management. It sets forth standards for the retrieval, manufacture, storage, and use of stem cells, ensuring that stem cells used in these therapies are obtained from facilities that meet rigorous regulatory and accreditation requirements. The facilities must be registered with the FDA and certified or accredited by the National Marrow Donor Program, the World Marrow Donor Association, the Association for the Advancement of Blood and Biotherapies, or the American Association of Tissue Banks. These facilities are also required to provide physicians with a post-thaw viability analysis report before the stem cells are used in treatments.

Before administering any stem cell therapy, the bill requires physicians to obtain signed informed consent from patients. This consent must clearly inform the patient of the nature and purpose of the proposed treatment, as well as the fact that the stem cell therapy has not been approved by the FDA. The patient must also be made aware of the anticipated results of the therapy, the recognized risks, complications, and potential benefits associated with the treatment, and alternative options, including non-treatment. Physicians are also required to encourage patients to consult with their primary care provider before proceeding with any stem cell therapy.

In addition, the bill mandates that physicians must include a specific notice in any advertisement for stem cell therapies that are not FDA-approved. This notice must be clearly legible and in a type size no smaller than the largest font size used in the advertisement.

The bill establishes criminal penalties and disciplinary actions for violations. Any physician who willfully performs or participates in treatments using human cells or tissues derived from a fetus or an embryo after an abortion commits a felony of the third degree. Additionally, physicians who are involved in the sale, manufacture, or distribution of computer products created using human cells, tissues, or cellular or tissue-based products in violation of the bill commit a felony of the third degree. These felonies are punishable as provided in ss. 775.082, 775.083, or 775.084, F.S.

Beyond criminal penalties, any violation of the provisions of the bill may subject the physician to disciplinary action by the Board of Medicine or the Board of Osteopathic Medicine, as applicable. The bill authorizes the Boards to adopt rules necessary to implement its provisions.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 112-0

Committee on Health Policy

CS/CS/SB 1808 — Refund of Overpayments Made by Patients

by Rules Committee; Health Policy Committee; and Senator Burton

The bill requires health care practitioners, facilities, providers, and anyone who accepts payment from insurance for services rendered by health care practitioners, to refund any overpayment made by the patient no later than 30 days after determining that the patient made an overpayment.

Under the bill, if a health care practitioner fails to timely refund an overpayment after he or she determines that an overpayment was made, the failure constitutes grounds for disciplinary action by the applicable board, or the Department of Health if there is no board.

Under the bill, if a facility or provider licensed by the Agency for Health Care Administration fails to timely refund an overpayment, the agency may impose an administrative penalty of up to $500 on the licensee.

The bill's requirement to timely refund such an overpayment does not apply to overpayments made to providers by health insurers and health maintenance organizations, and the bill instead defers to existing law for such cases.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect January 1, 2026.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 112-0

Committee on Health Policy

SB 7018 — OGSR/Parental Consent Requirements Before Terminating a Pregnancy

by Health Policy Committee and Senator Harrell

The bill saves an existing public records exemption from repeal under the Open Government Sunset Review Act. The exemption protects certain information that could be used to identify a minor who is petitioning for a judicial waiver of parental consent under the Parental Notice of and Consent for Abortion Act. The exemption was created in 2020 and was scheduled for repeal on October 2, 2025.

The exemption protects from disclosure any identifying information held by a circuit or appellate court, the Office of Criminal Conflict and Civil Regional Counsel, or the Justice Administrative Commission. These entities may possess the identifying information when the minor seeks a judicial waiver from a court, when the Office of Criminal Conflict and Civil Regional Counsel represents the minor in a court proceeding, or when the Justice Administrative Commission processes payments for a court-appointed private attorney who represents the minor.

The Open Government Sunset Review Act requires the Legislature to review each public record exemption five years after enactment. The bill removes the scheduled repeal date of the public records exemption so that the identifying information continues to be confidential and exempt from disclosure.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect October 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 115-0

Committee on Judiciary

CS/HB 157 — Service of Process

by Civil Justice & Claims Subcommittee and Rep. Redondo (CS/SB 576 by Judiciary Committee and Senator Leek)

The bill (Chapter 2025-13, L.O.F.) amends state laws governing service of process, which is the procedure by which a party to a lawsuit gives appropriate notice to other parties that the lawsuit has begun.

Specifically, the bill:

- Allows a process server to serve process on registered agents during additional time periods and locations and on additional individuals.
- Provides how one may serve process on business organizations in receivership.
- Clarifies how to execute substitute service of process on the Secretary of State.
- Clarifies how to execute substitute service of process on nonresidents or on individuals or business entities that are concealing their whereabouts.
- Deems former residents of this state to have appointed the Secretary of State as their agent for purposes of service of process.
- Validates service of process made in conformity with either a 2022 law that substantially revised the state's service of process statute, or prior law, ensuring the validity of default judgments based on service under either statutory regime.

These provisions were approved by the Governor and took effect on April 29, 2025, except as otherwise provided.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 113-0

Committee on Judiciary

CS/CS/SB 262 — Trusts

by Community Affairs Committee; Judiciary Committee; and Senator Berman

The bill amends the Florida Trust Code. The Code governs the creation of trusts and the authority and responsibilities of trustees to manage property held in trust for the benefit of others.

Trust Decanting

The bill clarifies existing law relating to trust decanting, which refers to pouring trust assets into a new trust. Trust decanting is often appropriate due to changes in circumstances, administrative ease, or changes in tax laws.

Under the trust decanting provisions of the bill, a trustee is expressly authorized to modify the terms of a first trust to create or fund a second trust as a means of making distributions to beneficiaries. Additionally, the bill expressly states that a trustee who is authorized to invade the principal of a trust to create or fund a second trust is not considered to be the settlor of the second trust. This change ensures that a trustee will not be disqualified from serving as a trustee of a second trust as the result of having created or funded the second trust from the assets of the first trust.

A Former Trustee's Liability and A Successor Trustee's Responsibilities

With regard to a former trustee's liability and successor trustees' responsibilities, the bill clarifies that a person in a fiduciary relationship to a beneficiary may not bring an action on behalf of a beneficiary if the beneficiary is barred from bringing the claim or action.

Ademption by Satisfaction

The bill adopts nearly identical provisions contained in the Florida Probate Code to clarify when an "ademption by satisfaction" occurs with assets from a trust. The phrase "ademption by satisfaction" as used in the Florida Probate Code refers to the cancellation of a gift or distribution of an asset because the asset has already been given to the intended recipient. Often, property is missing from a trust at the settlor's death because the settlor gave the property to someone during the settlor's lifetime or because the property was distributed to someone from a revocable trust during the settlor's lifetime. Under the bill, these gifts from a trust will be considered satisfied or adeemed *only if* a written statement is made, either in the terms of the trust, in a contemporaneous statement that the gift is to be deducted from the devise, or when the recipient acknowledges in writing that the gift has been satisfied.

Community Property and Community Property Trust

The definitions of "community property" and "community property trust" are amended by the bill to clarify that transferring homestead property into a community trust is not a change of ownership for the purpose of reassessing the value of homestead property. This clarification will

prevent property appraisers from reassessing the value of a home which would likely result in higher property taxes.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 114-0

Committee on Judiciary

CS/CS/SB 322 — Property Rights

by Rules Committee; Judiciary Committee; and Senator Rodriguez

The bill creates a nonjudicial procedure for a property owner to request that the county sheriff remove an unauthorized person from commercial real property. This procedure is similar to procedures in existing law for the removal of an unauthorized person from a residential property. It provides that an owner of commercial property may request that the sheriff immediately remove an unauthorized person from the owner's property. An unauthorized person is someone not authorized to occupy the property who is not a current or former tenant.

An owner must contact the sheriff and file a complaint under penalty of perjury listing the relevant facts that show eligibility for relief. If the complaint shows that the owner is eligible for relief and the sheriff can verify ownership of the property, the sheriff must remove the unauthorized person. The property owner must pay the sheriff the civil eviction fee plus an hourly rate if a deputy must stand by and keep the peace while the unauthorized person is removed. A person wrongfully removed pursuant to this procedure has a cause of action against the owner for three times the fair market rent, damages, costs, and attorney fees.

Additionally, the bill expands crimes relating to unlawfully occupying a residential dwelling or fraudulently advertising residential property for sale or lease to include commercial properties.

The procedures in the bill are similar to procedures enacted during the 2024 Legislative Session for the removal of an unauthorized person from a residential dwelling. The bill also amends that 2024 enactment to add an express grant of authority to a sheriff to use reasonably necessary force to enter a property and corrects a cross-reference.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 39-0; House 111-0

Committee on Judiciary

HB 513 — Electronic Transmittal of Court Orders

by Rep. Gentry and others (CS/SB 774 by Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice and Senator Wright)

This bill (Chapter 2025-10, L.O.F.) requires the clerk of court to electronically deliver to the sheriff certain court orders requiring prompt attention by the sheriff for the sake of public safety. The clerk is required to complete the task within 6 hours after a judge signs an order. The orders requiring prompt delivery are orders to detain an individual for an involuntary mental health examination, orders to detain an individual for involuntary substance abuse evaluation, and orders to take possession of firearms and ammunition from an individual pursuant to a risk protection order.

These provisions were approved by the Governor and take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 108-0

Committee on Judiciary

CS/SB 538 — State Courts System

by Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice and Senator Bradley

This bill amends several statutes addressing different aspects of the state courts system. These amendments:

- Allow a circuit court duty judge, which is a judge who is responsible for handling urgent matters outside of regular court hours, to hold and conduct hearings in places other than his or her chambers.
- Require each judicial circuit to have a judge available at all times to conduct hearings.
- Repeal the $1,500 per day limit on fees paid to a court-appointed arbitrator.
- Allow a judge to authenticate documents containing written statements under oath made by others without using a personal or court seal.
- Allow the clerks to request specified reimbursements through the Justice Administrative Commission (JAC) rather than through the Office of the State Courts Administrator (OSCA).

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 115-0

Committee on Judiciary

CS/CS/CS/HB 615 — Electronic Delivery of Notices Between Landlords and Tenants

by Judiciary Committee; Housing, Agriculture & Tourism Subcommittee; Civil Justice & Claims Subcommittee; and Rep. Esposito and others (CS/SB 1164 by Community Affairs Committee and Senator Leek)

The bill (Chapter 2025-16, L.O.F.) allows a landlord or tenant to deliver any notices required by the Florida Residential Landlord and Tenant Act to the other party electronically by e-mail if:

- The landlord and tenant sign an addendum to the rental agreement agreeing to the electronic delivery of notices; and
- The landlord and tenant provide a valid e-mail address for this purpose.

The bill specifies the form that the landlord or tenant must sign. The form advises the parties that agreeing to the electronic delivery of notices is voluntary and that they may revoke the agreement or update their e-mail addresses at any time.

Additionally, notices delivered electronically in accordance with the bill are deemed delivered when sent, unless the e-mail is returned to the sender as undeliverable. The bill does not preclude the service of notices by any other means authorized by law.

These provisions were approved by the Governor and take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 35-1; House 108-0

Committee on Judiciary

CS/CS/SB 948 — Flood Disclosure

by Rules Committee; Judiciary Committee; and Senator Bradley

The bill requires a landlord of residential rental property or a mobile home park owner to disclose certain information regarding flood risks and past flooding of the property to prospective tenants. A tenant who does not receive the disclosures and who incurs substantial losses or damages due to flooding may terminate the lease and may be entitled to refund of advance rents paid if certain conditions are met.

Similarly, the bill requires the developer of a condominium or cooperative to disclose information relating to flood risks and past flooding of the property in a contract for the sale or long-term rental of a condominium or cooperative unit.

Lastly, the bill expands the flood-related disclosures required under current law that must be provided to a prospective purchaser of residential real property. The bill requires the seller to disclose whether he or she is aware of any flood damage that occurred during his or her ownership and whether he or she has received assistance from any source for flood damage to the property, as opposed to just federal sources.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect October 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 114-0

Committee on Judiciary

CS/CS/HB 1173 — Florida Trust Code

by Judiciary Committee; Civil Justice & Claims Subcommittee; and Rep. Duggan (CS/SB 806 by Judiciary Committee and Senator Yarborough)

The bill (Chapter 2025-18, L.O.F.) provides that, where the Attorney General has asserted his or her authority to enforce the terms of a charitable trust having its principal place of administration in this state, the Attorney General has the exclusive standing to assert the interests of the general public in the trust. The term "standing" means the legal right to pursue a particular civil action. This has the effect of limiting the common law special interest rule that gives a person having a "special interest" in a charitable trust standing to file an action to enforce the terms of the charitable trust.

These provisions became law upon approval by the Governor on April 29, 2025.
Vote: Senate 32-4; House 107-3

Committee on Judiciary

CS/SB 1430 — Postjudgment Execution Proceedings Relating to Terrorism

by Criminal Justice Committee and Senator Collins

The bill expands current law remedies available to a victim of international terrorism to collect a civil judgment against a terrorist party or an agency or instrumentality of a terrorist. The bill authorizes creditor process to be served upon any person or entity over whom the court has jurisdiction, thereby subjecting the assets to Florida jurisdiction. A Florida court enforcing a terrorism victim's anti-terrorism judgment may garnish intangible assets wherever they are located, without territorial limitation. If these intangible assets are traceable to the terrorist judgment debtor they are subject to execution, garnishment, and turnover by a United States securities custodian or intermediary. In addition, if an electronic funds transfer is currently being held by an intermediary and either the sender or recipient is the terrorist judgment debtor or a related party, the funds are deemed to be property of the terrorist judgment debtor and subject to seizure to apply against the judgment.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 115-0

Committee on Judiciary

CS/CS/HB 1559 — Vexatious Litigants

by Judiciary Committee; Civil Justice & Claims Subcommittee; and Reps. Sapp, Fabricio, and others (CS/CS/SB 1650 by Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice; Judiciary Committee; and Senators Grall and Yarborough)

A vexatious litigant is a pro se litigant who has filed numerous meritless actions for the purpose of abusing or harassing the other party. Such a person who has filed five or more civil actions in the past 5 years that were adversely determined against the person is subject to being listed as a vexatious litigant on a registry maintained by the Florida Supreme Court. A vexatious litigant on the registry is barred from filing a pro se civil action without court permission and the posting of financial security. A clerk of court must reject any case filing that a vexatious litigant attempts to file without permission or security. The bill amends the Florida Vexatious Litigant Law based on suggestions from a workgroup appointed by the Supreme Court to examine the law.

The bill expands the scope of the law to take additional instances of misconduct into account in determining whether a person is subject to registration as a vexatious litigant. The additional instances of misconduct include:

- Misconduct in additional case types—small claims cases and family law actions.
- Misconduct in additional courts—courts of other states and federal courts.
- Adverse decisions in cases commenced during the last 7 years instead of the last 5 years, except for cases found by a court to have been commenced in good faith.
- The repeated filing of frivolous pleadings in a single case.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 114-0

Committee on Judiciary

CS/SB 1622 — Beaches

by Rules Committee and Senators Trumbull, Rouson, and Berman

The bill repeals s. 163.035, F.S., which establishes procedures that a governmental entity must follow when attempting to establish a "recreational customary use of property," and bypasses certain statutory procedures to declare the mean high water line to be the erosion control line (ECL) in certain specified counties.

The customary use doctrine establishes public use rights over certain dry sandy areas of privately-owned beaches. The statutory procedures repealed by the bill would have required:

- A public hearing to adopt a formal notice of intent to affected property owners, which notice alleges the existence of a recreational customary use on their properties.
- A judicial proceeding to consider whether the alleged customary use has been ancient, reasonable, without interruption, and free from dispute.

Repeal of the statute means a return to how customary use rights were determined prior to enactment of the statute:

- A governmental entity may declare the existence of a customary use and adopt a local customary use ordinance without following the procedures in s. 163.035, F.S.
- Property owners must file a lawsuit challenging the ordinance and demonstrate in court that the public does not enjoy customary use rights over their privately-owned beaches.
- Courts will apply the common law doctrine of customary use when ascertaining, on a case-by-case basis, whether the public enjoys customary use rights over privately-owned beaches.

The bill also declares the mean high water line to be the ECL in certain counties. Specifically, with respect to those counties adjacent to the Gulf of America having at least 3 municipalities and an estimated population of less than 275,000, the bill:

- Bypasses certain existing statutory procedures for establishing the ECL on critically eroded beaches and declares the mean high water line to be the ECL.
- Directs the Board of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund to prepare and record, in the official and platting records of the counties subject to the bill, certain documents confirming the ECL's location on critically eroded shorelines, but only if an ECL has not already been established.
- Authorizes the Department of Environmental Protection to proceed with beach restoration projects for areas it has designated as critically eroded, and provides that notwithstanding existing law, such projects do not require public easements.
- Includes legislative declarations that the state does not intend to extend its ownership claims beyond what it already owns, and that beach restoration projects for critically eroded beaches are in the public interest.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.
Vote: Senate 35-2; House 108-0

Committee on Judiciary

CS/CS/SB 1652 — Public Records/Pleading, Request for Relief, or Other Document Stricken by a Court

by Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice; Judiciary Committee; and Senators Grall and Yarborough

The bill creates a public records exemption for certain information contained in a document that has been stricken by a court in a noncriminal case. For the exemption to apply, the court must find that the matter is immaterial, impertinent, or sham and would defame or cause unwarranted damage to an individual's good name or reputation or jeopardize his or her safety. This kind of information often appears in court proceedings involving a "vexatious litigant." A vexatious litigant is a person who has filed multiple lawsuits that are meritless; however, these individuals are also known to submit documents that are considered scandalous or harassing.

The bill also contains a statement of public necessity as required by law.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 35-2; House 115-0

Committee on Judiciary

HB 6017 — Recovery of Damages for Medical Negligence Resulting in Death

by Reps. Trabulsy, López, J., and others (SB 734 by Senators Yarborough, Burgess, Rouson, and Martin)

One aspect of the state's wrongful death law allows certain surviving family members the right to sue for their noneconomic damages (commonly referred to as "pain and suffering damages) for the loss of their family member. However, there is a limited exception by which neither an adult child (25+) of an unmarried person who dies due to medical negligence, nor the parents of an adult child (25+) who dies due to medical negligence, may recover noneconomic damages.

The bill repeals this exception and thus provides that, where a wrongful death occurs as a result of medical negligence, a decedent's adult children may recover noneconomic damages if there is no surviving spouse and provides that the parents of an adult decedent may recover noneconomic damages if there is no surviving spouse or surviving minor or adult children. Accordingly, survivors of a person who dies as a result of medical negligence have the same right to recover noneconomic damages as the survivors of a person who dies from any other form of negligence.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 33-4; House 104-6

Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

SB 116 —Veterans

by Rules Committee; Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services; and Senators Burgess, Collins, Avila, and Davis

The bill amends multiple provisions regarding veterans. Specifically, the bill:

- Reduces the maximum number of nominees the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame Council transmits to the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA) for submission to the Governor and Cabinet for induction into the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame from 20 to 5.
- Requires the FDVA to:
  - Expand the scope of an ongoing survey by evaluating veterans and their spouses and dependents' awareness of available programs and services and make recommendations increasing such awareness.
  - Ensure coordination with the U.S. Department of Defense regarding the reentry of servicemembers into civilian life. The FDVA may engage county and city veteran service officers for assistance in connecting servicemembers with civilian resources.
  - Report actions taken to implement provisions of the bill and to include in its 2025 annual report an evaluation of health literacy among Florida veterans along with its recommendations on increasing public awareness.
  - Develop a statewide plan to establish adult day health care facilities across the state to serve veterans and their families. The bill also directs the FDVA to provide a report detailing the plan to the Legislature by November 1, 2025.
- Expands the type of training to be provided to the FDVA claims examiners and county and city veterans service officers under the Veteran Suicide Prevention Training Pilot Program to include mental health training. The bill requires pilot program participants to be trained to recognize indicators of mental health conditions and also requires the FDVA to contract with an organization having proven experience developing and implementing veteran-relevant and evidence-based mental health assistance to develop curriculum for such training.
- Requires Florida is For Veterans, Inc., to advise the FDVA on problems or needs of retired and recently separated military personnel and their spouses.
- Provides that a percentage of the proceeds from the sale of the Gadsden Flag specialty license plate may be used for administrative costs.

The bill appropriates $50,000 in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund to the FDVA to conduct a survey evaluating the extent to which resident veterans and their spouses and dependents are aware of existing programs and services and for the FDVA to develop a plan to establish adult day health care facilities to serve veterans and their families and $300,000 in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund to the FDVA to implement the Veteran Suicide Training Pilot Program, as amended by the bill.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 39-0; House 98-0

Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

CS/HB 797 — Veteran and Spouse Nursing Home Beds

by Intergovernmental Affairs Subcommittee and Rep. LaMarca and others (SB 788 by Senators Truenow and Gaetz)

The bill creates s. 296.415, F.S., to authorize a licensed skilled nursing facility located on the campus of a nonprofit retirement community that exclusively provides housing for veterans, their spouses, and surviving spouses to request to designate or alter the designation of certain beds as veteran and spouse nursing beds if the residents admitted meet the criteria for admissions to a state veterans' nursing home in s. 296.36, F.S., and the beds are operated according to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs Community Nursing Home Program. The bill authorizes the director of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA) to approve a bed designation request if the request meets those requirements as well as the nondiscrimination, admissions, financial contribution, and inspection requirements for state veterans' nursing homes.

The bill revises exemptions to the certificate of need (CON) process for veterans nursing homes by providing that a CON is not required for:

- State veterans' nursing homes operated by or on behalf of the FDVA that are constructed with state or federal funds and where the federal government pays a per diem rate not to exceed one-half of the cost of the veterans' care.
- The consolidation or combination of licensed skilled nursing facilities or the transfer of beds between licensed skilled nursing facilities which are for the sole use of veterans, their spouses, or surviving spouses in accordance with s. 296.415, F.S., if the facilities have a shared controlling interest and are not more than 100 miles apart.

The bill authorizes the FDVA to adopt rules to implement the bed designation process for certain nonprofit retirement communities.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 115-0

Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

CS/CS/SB 910 — Veterans' Benefits Assistance

by Rules Committee; Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee; and Senator Collins

The bill amends s. 435.02, F.S., to include the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA) in the definition of "specified agency" for purposes of conducting state and national criminal history background screening on persons who work with children or persons who are elderly or disabled.

Additionally, the bill creates s. 501.9741, F.S., to govern the payment of fees by a veteran to an unaccredited person for advising, assisting, or consulting in securing federal benefits. The bill authorizes compensation for advising, assisting, or consulting with an individual regarding any preparation, presentation, or prosecution of a veteran's claim, or a claim by any other individual under the laws and regulations administered by the FDVA or the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) if, before rendering services, a written agreement is executed. Compensation for such services is contingent upon securing an increase in benefits awarded and may not exceed the lesser of four times the amount of the monthly increase in benefits awarded based on the claim or $12,500. A provider must ensure that all individuals who directly assist a veteran in a veterans' benefits matter complete a level 2 background screening that screens for certain offenses before entering into an agreement with a veteran for veterans' benefits matters.

The bill prohibits a provider from guaranteeing, either directly or by implication, a successful outcome or that an individual is certain to receive specific veterans' benefits or a specific level, percentage, or amount of veterans' benefits. The bill also specifies prohibitions on the manner in which a provider of veterans' benefits matters advises, assists, or consults. In addition, the bill prohibits compensation for referring an individual to another person who will advise, assist, or consult with the individual regarding any preparation, presentation, or prosecution of a veteran's claim. The bill also prohibits compensation to a provider under certain conditions if a complaint based on the alleged absence of good faith is filed with the Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General.

A violation of the provisions of the bill is a violation of the Florida Deceptive and Unfair Trade Practices Act. Violators may be subject to penalties for violations against a military servicemember or his or spouse or dependent child.

The bill may not be construed as applying to, limiting, or expanding the requirements imposed on agents or employees of the FDVA or agents or attorneys accredited by the VA.

The bill may have an indeterminate negative fiscal impact on state government.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become a law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 114-0

Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

SB 1516 — Aerospace Industry

by Senator Wright

The bill establishes the International Aerospace Innovation Fund (IAIF), administered by Space Florida, to accelerate global aerospace innovation by funding collaborative research and development projects, workforce development initiatives, and commercialization efforts.

The bill requires that the IAIF:

- Develop partnerships between Florida-based aerospace companies and international aerospace companies.
- Drive innovation in critical technology areas related to aerospace as defined in s. 331.303, F.S., including, but not limited to, space exploration, advanced manufacturing, and space infrastructure.
- Attract global investment in Florida's aerospace ecosystem.

The bill requires Space Florida to secure funding for the IAIF which may be received from the state, private sector investments, or international contributions.

The bill also requires Space Florida to develop eligibility criteria for projects to be funded by the IAIF. At a minimum, a project must:

- Involve at least one aerospace company or organization that is based in this state;
- Be a partnership involving an international aerospace company, a university, a space agency, or a research institute; and
- Be intended, and have demonstrated potential, for commercialization.

Additionally, the bill requires Space Florida to establish a panel of experts to evaluate and recommend projects seeking funding by the IAIF and to establish an application process for the projects. Funding must be competitively awarded based on merit. Space Florida is also required to identify and establish partnerships with countries with robust aerospace sectors. The bill authorizes Space Florida to negotiate and enter into bilateral agreements for the purposes of the IAIF, which may include, but are not limited to, the establishment of co-funding commitments, intellectual property rights, and collaboration terms.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 115-0

Committee on Regulated Industries

HB 11 — Municipal Water and Sewer Utility Rates

by Rep. Robinson, F. and others (CS/SB 202 by Rules Committee and Senators Jones and Davis)

The bill creates an exception to the maximum rates that municipalities may charge municipal water and sewer utility customers that are outside of the municipality's boundaries under s. 180.191, F.S. The bill provides that if a municipal utility provides water and sewer services to a second municipality, and serves that second municipality using a facility in that second municipality, that municipality must charge the customers within that second municipality the same rates, fees, and charges as the customers within its own municipal boundaries.

The bill provides the following definitions:

- "Facility" means a water treatment facility, wastewater treatment facility, intake station, pumping station, well, and other physical components of a water or wastewater system. The term "facility" in the bill does not include facilities that transport water from the point of entry to a wastewater treatment facility, or from a water source or treatment facility to the customer.
- "Wastewater treatment facility" means a facility that accepts and treats domestic or industrial wastewater.
- "Water treatment facility" means a facility within a water system which can alter the physical, chemical, or bacteriological quality of water.

The provisions of the bill are limited only to counties specified in s. 125.011(1), F.S. These counties are ones that have adopted a home rule charter, by resolution of its board of county commissioners, pursuant to ss. 10, 11, and 24 of Article VIII of the Florida Constitution of 1885, as preserved by Art. VIII, s. 6(e), State Constitution. Monroe, Hillsborough, and Miami-Dade counties are the only counties that could adopt a home rule charter under this provision, and, to date, only Miami-Dade has done so. Hillsborough has adopted a home rule charter, however, it has done so pursuant to ch. 125, part IV, F.S., and, thus, would not meet the definition provided in s. 125.011(1), F.S.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-2; House 111-0

Committee on Regulated Industries

CS/CS/SB 344 — Telecommunications Access System Act of 1991

by Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government; Regulated Industries Committee; and Senators Rodriguez and Berman

The bill revises Florida's Telecommunications Access System Act of 1991 (TASA), which provides for services to enable individuals with hearing or speech disabilities to connect them to standard (i.e., voice) telephone users. Specifically, the bill:

- Revises the intent of the TASA law to add a statement that "the telecommunications access system should provide access to specialized communications technology capable of using existing or future devices or equipment necessary for persons with hearing loss or speech impairment or who are deafblind to access telecommunications services;"
- Revises the TASA law to reflect modern advances in communications technology by:
  - Authorizing the use of advanced technologies beyond the landline telephone communications system authorized in TASA;
  - Allowing for the adoption of new, emerging, and not yet contemplated communications technologies as they come into the marketplace;
- Revises the membership of TASA's advisory committee;
- Establishes income qualifications for recipients of specialized communications technology. These requirements must be based upon income qualifications or participation in other state or federal programs based on income, which requirements must be set at no less than double, but no more than triple, the federal poverty level;
- Makes technical revisions, including updating terminology referencing persons with specific disabilities;
- Prohibits the Public Service Commission from increasing surcharges assessed to subscribers for each of their basic telecommunications access lines (i.e. landlines) to fund TASA services when excess funds exist in the TASA administrator's reserve fund; and
- Decreases the maximum permitted surcharge from $.25 to $.15, per land line, per month.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 112-0

Committee on Regulated Industries

CS/SB 578 — Wine Containers

by Commerce and Tourism Committee and Senator Leek

The bill allows the sale of wine in any container holding 5.16 gallons. Under current law, wine may be sold in containers holding 5.16 gallons only if the containers are reusable. Wine may also be sold in glass containers holding 4.5 liters, 9 liters, 12 liters, or 15 liters of wine.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-1; House 115-0

Committee on Regulated Industries

SB 606 — Public Lodging and Public Food Service Establishments

by Senator Leek

The bill revises requirements for public lodging establishments. It revises the term "transient public lodging establishment" to mean any unit, group of units, dwelling, building, or group of buildings within a single complex of buildings which is rented to guests more than three times in a calendar year for periods of less than 30 consecutive days or which is advertised or held out to the public as a place regularly rented to guests for periods of less than 30 consecutive days.

The term "nontransient public lodging establishment" is revised to mean any unit, group of units, dwelling, building, or group of buildings within a single complex of buildings which is rented to guests for periods of at least 30 consecutive days or which is advertised or held out to the public as a place regularly rented to guests for periods of at least 30 consecutive days.

Current law does not specify that the rental periods to qualify as a transient or nontransient public lodging establishment are based on consecutive days. The bill also removes references to one calendar month in these definitions.

The terms "transient establishment" and "nontransient establishment" are revised to mean any public lodging establishment that is rented or leased to guests by an operator for transient or nontransient occupancy, respectively. The bill removes the condition that establishment status as transient or nontransient is based on the establishment operator's intent regarding whether the guest's stay will be temporary.

The terms "transient occupancy" and "nontransient occupancy" are revised to provide that a guest's occupancy of a dwelling unit at a hotel, motel, vacation rental, bed and breakfast inn, or timeshare project, as defined in s. 509.242, F.S., is temporary or not temporary, respectively, unless a written rental or leasing agreement expressly states that the unit may be the guest's sole residence. The bill removes the rebuttable presumption providing that occupancy is a "transient occupancy" or "nontransient occupancy" based on the establishment operator's intent regarding whether the accommodation will be the guest's sole residence.

The bill requires written notice, which may be by text, email, or printed paper, when a public lodging establishment notifies a guest to leave because they failed to check out or pay for their unit by the check-out time. The notice is effective upon delivery, whether notice is provided in person or by telephone or e-mail, using the contact information provided by the guest, or, with respect to a public lodging establishment, upon delivery to the guest's dwelling unit.

The bill provides that a law enforcement officer may arrest a guest of a public lodging establishment or food establishment who remains after the request to leave has been provided to the guest.

Effective July 1, 2026, the bill requires every public food service establishment which charges an operations charge to include notice of the charge on its food menu, written contract, and website

or mobile application where orders are placed. The term "operations charge" means an automatic fee or charge, other than a government-imposed tax, that a customer is required to pay in addition to the cost of the food and beverage purchased. The term includes, but is not limited to, service charges, automatic gratuities, credit card surcharges, and delivery fees.

The notice of a gratuity or operations charge must include the amount or percentage of the operations charge and the purpose of the charge. The notice of the operations charge must appear in a font that is equal to or greater than the font used for menu item descriptions or the general provisions of the written contract.

Each copy of a customer's receipt must contain separate lines for the gratuity, operations charge, and sales tax. If the operations charge includes an automatic gratuity, it must be separately stated on the receipt.

If a public food service establishment does not provide menus, table service, or written contracts for banquet, catering, or event services, the notice must appear in an obvious and clearly readable manner on the menu board or on an obvious and clearly readable sign by the register where the customer pays.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025, except as otherwise provided.
Vote: Senate 35-2; House 104-9

Committee on Regulated Industries

CS/HB 703 — Utility Relocation

by Commerce Committee and Rep. Robinson, W. and others (CS/CS/CS/SB 818 by Appropriations Committee; Rules Committee; Transportation Committee; and Senator McClain)

The bill amends the process under which utilities located within the right-of-way of a public road or publicly-owned rail corridor must be relocated when such utility is found by an authority (Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and local government entities) to be unreasonably interfering in any way with the convenient, safe, or continuous use, or the maintenance, improvement, extension, or expansion, of such public road or publicly-owned rail corridor. The general requirement is that utility owners must pay for such relocation.

The bill creates the Utility Relocation Reimbursement Grant Program (grant program) within the Department of Commerce (DCM) to reimburse providers of communications services which are subject to the state's communications services tax provisions (service provider), for relocation expenses directly attributable to the physical relocation of facilities required by a county or municipal authority. The grant program is funded by a transfer of the tax remitted under s. 218.61, F.S., (the Local Government Half-cent Sales Tax program). Specifically, the bill authorizes the Department of Revenue to distribute, by a nonoperating transfer in monthly installment, $50 million of the state communications services tax that gets distributed to counties and municipalities pursuant to the Local Government Half-cent Sales Tax program to the DCM. The remainder of the funds transfer to the Local Government Half-cent Sales Tax Clearing Trust Fund, with 0.1018 percent distributed to the Public Employees Relations Commission (PERC). The bill directs the transfer to the PERC to begin October 1, 2025.

Service providers may apply to the grant program for reimbursement of expenses relating to the relocation of facilities required by a county or municipal authority. Reimbursement from the grant program is subject to funds availability. If the grant program lacks the funds to pay for such relocation, the county or municipal authority requiring the relocation remains not responsible for paying the expense of such relocation work, except as otherwise provided in the state's existing utility relocation law in s. 337.403(1), F.S.

The bill also revises the process for communications services providers that have permitted infrastructure within a planned or existing public right-of-way within 90 days after a project is added to the department's project schedule which may require the provider to relocate its infrastructure for roadway improvements to increase safety or reduce congestion. "Department" in the bill is defined as FDOT and the Greater Miami, Tampa, and Central Florida Expressway Authorities and the Jacksonville Transportation Authority. In addition to revising notification requirements, the bill requires—if the infrastructure relocation is a result of roadway improvements within the public right-of-way to increase safety or reduce congestion and the impacted infrastructure was, at the time of notification under this subsection, installed within the past seven state fiscal years—that the department incur at least 50 percent of the cost of the relocation.

The bill provides a legislative finding and declaration that the bill fulfills an important state interest. The bill also provides an appropriation of $50 million in nonrecurring funds from the DCM's Grants and Donations Trust Fund for the grant program for Fiscal Year 2025-2026.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect October 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 106-0

Committee on Regulated Industries

CS/CS/HB 715 — Roofing Services

by Commerce Committee; Industries & Professional Activities Subcommittee; and Rep. Porras and others (CS/CS/SB 1076 by Rules Committee; Regulated Industries Committee; and Senator McClain)

The bill expands the scope of work for licensed roofing contractors to include evaluation and enhancement of roof-to-wall connections for structures with wood roof decking provided that any enhancement was properly installed and inspected in accordance with certain requirements.

The bill provides that a resident may cancel a roofing contract without penalty within 180 days of an event causing a state of emergency. The option to cancel a roofing contract entered into because of a state of emergency only applies to owners whose property is in the geographic area covered by the state of emergency.

Finally, the bill requires contractors to provide notice in contracts for the replacement or repair of residential roofs that states property owners should contact their insurance provider to confirm coverage and reimbursement of the proposed work before signing the contract.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 112-1

Committee on Regulated Industries

CS/HB 897 — Timeshare Plan Management

by Housing, Agriculture & Tourism Subcommittee and Rep. Berfield and others (CS/SB 496 by Regulated Industries Committee and Senator McClain)

The bill revises regulations related to timeshare plans and their management. It clarifies that timeshare plans are governed by ch. 721, F.S., rather than created under that chapter. The bill provides that community association managers (CAMs) and CAM firms who manage timeshare plans are subject to s. 721.13, F.S., relating to the managing entities of timeshare plans, rather than to ch. 468, part VIII, F.S., relating to the regulation of CAMs, including record-keeping requirements that are applicable to the managing entities of timeshare plans.

The bill also exempts CAMs and CAM firms managing timeshares from the conflict-of-interest provisions that are applicable to the CAMs and community associations, such as condominium and homeowners' associations. The bill provides that CAMs and CAM firms managing timeshares are subject to the related party transaction disclosure that the managing entity of timeshare plans must make in the annual budget. Under current law, CAMs managing a community association must disclose any activity or proposed service which may reasonably be construed by the association's board to be a conflict of interest, and associations are required to follow a process for addressing potential conflicts of interest, such as considering multiple bids for the activity or proposed service.

The bill provides that timeshare management firms and their licensed employees are subject to the regulations governing timeshare managing entities, including violations related to refusal to mail any material requested by the purchaser and any failure of the managing entity to faithfully discharge the fiduciary duty to purchasers. The bill also includes the timeshare management firm, and any individual licensed as a CAM employed by the timeshare management firm, in the exemption from liability for monetary damages in s. 721.13(13)(a), F.S., as provided in s. 617.0834, F.S., unless the officer, director, agent, or firm does not qualify for an exemption.

Additionally, the bill requires timeshare boards to meet at least once annually, instead of at least once each quarter as required for the boards of condominium associations.

The bill provides that, if a management firm provides goods or services through arrangements with a parent, affiliate, or subsidiary of the timeshare management firm, the existence of such arrangements must be disclosed annually to the members of that owners' association as an explanatory note to the annual budget pursuant to s. 721.13(13)(c)1., F.S., in the management contract, by mail sent to each owner's address on file for providing notice, in the notice of an annual or special meeting of the owners, by posting on the website of the applicable timeshare plan, or by any owner communication used by the managing entity.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 115-0

Committee on Regulated Industries

CS/CS/HB 913 — Condominium and Cooperative Associations

by Commerce Committee; Housing, Agriculture & Tourism Subcommittee; and Rep. Lopez, V. and others (CS/CS/CS/SB 1742 by Rules Committee; Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government; Regulated Industries Committee; and Senators Bradley and Pizzo)

The bill relates to the governance of condominium and cooperative associations and the practice of community association management.

Community Association Managers

Regarding community association managers (CAMs) and CAM firms, the bill:

- Revises the conflict-of-interest disclosure requirements for CAMs and CAM firms, including exempting conflicts of interest that are disclosed in the management contract from current law requirements;
- Prohibits persons who have had their CAM license revoked from having an indirect or direct ownership interest in a CAM firm, or being an employee, partner, officer, director, or trustee of a CAM firm for 10 years and may not reapply for a license for 10 years;
- Requires CAMs to maintain and update an online account with the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (department) specifying any services he or she is providing for a condominium, cooperative, or homeowners' association; and
- Requires the Division of Condominiums, Timeshares, and Mobile Homes (division) to give written notice to the CAM firm and to the community association when a CAM's license is suspended or revoked.

Milestone Inspections

Regarding milestone inspections of the structural integrity of condominium and cooperative buildings, the bill:

- Revises the requirements for milestone inspections to apply to condominium and cooperative buildings that are three "habitable" stories or more in height instead of three or more stories under current law;
- Requires local enforcement agencies report to the department, by October 1, 2025, specified information regarding the inspections, including the number of buildings inspected, and a list of buildings that have been deemed unsafe or uninhabitable;
- Requires the Office of Program Policy and Government Accountability to compile milestone inspection data and to submit a report to the Legislature; and
- Requires the boards of county commissioners to adopt an ordinance requiring associations and any other owners that are subject to milestone inspection requirements to commence repairs within 365 days after a phase two inspection is received.

Conflicts of Interest – Milestone and Structural Integrity Reserve Studies

The bill requires design professionals, e.g., architects and engineers, and licensed contractors who bid on structural integrity reserve studies (SIRS) and milestone inspections, to disclose in writing if they intend to bid on maintenance, repair, or replacement work related to the SIRS. A person who conducts or performs a SIRS or milestone inspection or provides recommended services may not have a direct or indirect interest in the firm conducting the study or be related to someone with such an interest unless disclosed to the association in writing. Failure to disclose makes the contract voidable and may result in professional discipline.

Insurance

The bill requires every condominium association to provide adequate property insurance, and:

- That the amount of adequate insurance coverage for full insurable value, replacement cost, or similar coverage may be based on the replacement cost of the property to be insured which must be determined at least once every three years.
- Clarifies the association's obligation to provide adequate insurance coverage for at least three or more community associations may be satisfied by obtaining and maintaining insurance coverage sufficient to cover an amount equal to the probable maximum loss for the communities for a 250-year windstorm event.

Annual Financial Statements

The bill revises the annual financial statement requirements for condominiums by:

- Increasing from 120 days to 180 days, the date by which the financial report must be completed after the end of the fiscal year;
- Allowing the association, as an alternative to delivering the annual financial statement, to provide a notice that the financial report will be mailed, hand delivered, or provided electronically via the Internet as requested by the unit owner;
- Requiring that an officer or director of the association sign an affidavit evidencing compliance with the requirements for delivery of the annual financial statement; and
- Requiring the approval of a majority of all of the voting interests to reduce the type of financial reporting.

Official Records

The bill requires condominium associations to keep as official records all:

- Bank statements and ledgers as official records;
- Recordings of meetings held by video conference;
- Affidavits required by ch. 718, F.S., including on the association's website; and
- Approved minutes of the board over the preceding 12 months on the association's website.

Associations must update the association's website within 30 days of any change.

Condominium Association Meetings

The bill allows condominium associations to conduct meetings by video conferencing, including board meetings, budget meetings, and unit member meetings, and:

- Allows board members who appear by video conference to vote, but their presence may not count towards a quorum;
- Requires meetings conducted by video conference to be recorded and kept as official records;
- Requires that the notice for a video conference meeting include a hyperlink and the address for the physical location of the meeting;
- Requires meetings to be held within 15 miles of the condominium property or within the same county; and
- Requires the division to adopt rules for the conduct of meetings by video conference.

Annual Budget Requirements

Relating to the budget requirements for condominium associations, the bill:

- Requires associations to simultaneously propose a substitute budget that excludes any discretionary spending if the proposed budget exceeds 115 percent of the assessments of the preceding year;
- Requires that the substitute budget be presented to the unit owners for approval before a budget can be adopted; and
- Revises the expenses that associations can exclude when determining whether assessments exceed 115 percent of the assessments of the preceding year by:
  - Removing "assessments for the betterment of the community;" and
  - Limiting the exclusion of anticipated expenses to expenses related to the SIRS inspection.

Reserves

Relating to the maintenance of reserves by condominium and cooperative associations, the bill:

- Allows all multicondominiums to use the "alternative funding method;"
- Increases the monetary threshold for reserve items from $10,000 to $25,000, with annual inflation increases;
- Provides for investment of reserve funds in certificates of deposit or deposits in banks and credit unions without a vote of the unit owners;
- Allows a unit-owner-controlled association that is required to have a SIRS to fund reserves by a special assessment, a line of credit, or loan, with the approval of a majority of the voting interests of the association;
- Allows condominium boards to pause reserve funding without unit owner approval when the condominium building is declared uninhabitable by the local building official;
- Allows unit-owner-controlled associations, for a budget adopted on or before December 31, 2028, that have completed the milestone inspection in the previous two years to

temporarily pause or reduce reserve contributions for no more than 2 consecutive annual budgets, upon a vote of a majority of the total voting interests, in order to fund needed repairs recommended by the milestone inspection. If an association pauses or reduces reserve funding, it must perform a SIRS before continuing reserve contribution in order to determine the association's reserve funding needs and to recommend a reserve funding plan; and

- Allows for funding of SIRS reserves by the pooling accounting method and allows boards to change the accounting method for reserves to a pooling accounting method or a straight-line accounting method without a vote of the members.

Structural Integrity Reserve Studies

Relating to condominium and cooperative associations, the bill:

- Revises the requirements for SIRS to apply the requirement to buildings that are three "habitable" stories or more in height;
- Extends the deadline by which associations must complete a required SIRS from December 31, 2024, to December 31, 2025;
- Requires that the SIRS, include a reserve "baseline" funding plan that ensures the reserve cash balance stays above zero;
- Requires that the SIRS must differentiate between mandatory reserve items and other reserve items;
- Allows associations that have completed the required milestone inspection to delay the SIRS for the two consecutive budget years following a milestone inspection in order to prioritize funding for repairs and maintenance required the milestone inspection;
- Exempts four-family dwellings with three or fewer habitable stories above ground from the SIRS requirements;
- Requires officers and directors of associations to sign an affidavit acknowledging receipt of a completed SIRS; and
- Requires the division to adopt by rule the form for the SIRS in coordination with the Florida Building Commission.

Electronic Voting

The bill revises electronic voting requirements for condominiums, including requiring the board to adopt a resolution allowing electronic voting if at least 25 percent of the voting interests petition the board to adopt a resolution for electronic voting.

Presale Disclosure

The bill extends the 3-day recission period for condominium sales by nondeveloper unit owners to 7 days.

Condos Within a Portion of a Building or Within a Multiple Parcel Building

The bill revises the provision in section 31 of Chapter 2024-244, Laws of Florida (CS/CS/CS/HB 1021), to provide that provisions related to condominiums within a portion of a building or within a multiple parcel do not apply retroactively and only apply to condominiums for which declarations were initially recorded on or after October 1, 2025.

The bill also provides that a condominium association created within a portion of a building may inspect and copy the books and records of the owner of the non-condominium portion of the building and that the condominium association must receive a financial report with respect to such costs.

Jurisdiction of the Division of Condominiums, Timeshares, and Mobile Homes

The bill expands the condominium jurisdiction of the division to include:

- Completion of milestone inspections;
- Requirements to maintain insurance and fidelity bonding for persons who disperse funds;
- Board member education requirements; and
- Reporting requirements for SIRS.

Reporting Requirement for Condominiums and Cooperatives

The bill requires condominium and cooperative associations to create an online account with the division and provide specified information by October 1, 2025, and only once per year thereafter, except that contact information must be updated within 30 days of a change. The division must provide associations at least 45 days to submit the information after the account is established. The information associations may be required to submit includes:

- Contact information for the association, its members of the board, and its CAM; and
- The number of units, age of buildings, and assessments, including the purpose for the assessments.

Law Enforcement

Redefines the term "official investigation" to include official investigations by the division relating to the criminal prohibitions against tampering with, harassing, or retaliating against a witness, victim, or informant.

Additional Condominium Provisions

The bill also:

- Expands the emergency powers of condominium and cooperative associations to require the evacuation of the property in the event of any evacuation order, instead of a mandatory evacuation order;
- Revises requirements related to maintenance and hurricane protection; and
- Revises requirements for nonresidential condominiums, including to the unit, appurtenances, or share of the common expenses.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025, except where otherwise provided.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 112-0

Committee on Regulated Industries

CS/SB 940 — Third-party Reservation Platforms

by Regulated Industries Committee and Senator McClain

The bill prohibits a third-party reservation platform (platform) from listing, advertising, promoting, or selling reservations for a public food service establishment through a platform's website, mobile application, or other Internet service without the platform having a contractual relationship or agreement with the food service establishment, or its contractual designee, to offer or arrange for reservations for on-premises service at such public food service establishment.

The bill defines the term "third-party reservation platform" to mean any website, mobile application, or other Internet service that:

- Offers or arranges for reservations for on-premises service for a customer at a food service establishment;
- Is owned and operated by a person other than the owner of the public food service establishment; and
- Does not have a contractual relationship or agreement with the public food service establishment, or its contractual designee, to offer or arrange for a reservation at the public food service establishment for on-premises service.

Under the bill, the term "third-party reservation platform" does not include a contractual designee of an individual customer which arranges for a personal and nontransferable reservation at a food service establishment at the request of the customer and at no cost to the customer, provided that the designee shares the individual customer's contact information with the food service establishment, allows the food service establishment to confirm the reservation with the individual customer, and honors requests from the food service establishment to opt out of future reservations created by the designee.

The Division of Hotels and Restaurants (division) within the Department of Business and Professional Regulation is authorized by the bill to impose a civil penalty on a platform not to exceed $1,000 for each violation of the prohibition in the bill, or of a division rule implementing the prohibition. Under the bill, violations may accrue on a daily basis for each day and each reservation for each food service establishment in which there has been a violation.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 114-0

Committee on Regulated Industries

CS/CS/SB 1574 — Energy Infrastructure Investment

by Fiscal Policy Committee; Regulated Industries Committee; and Senator DiCeglie

The bill amends s. 366.075, F.S., to require the Florida Public Service Commission (PSC) to establish an experimental mechanism to facilitate energy infrastructure investment in gas using the administrative proceeding structure created for natural gas facilities relocation cost recovery in s. 366.99, (2) through (6), F.S. As used in the section, "gas" means anaerobically generated biogas, landfill gas, or wastewater treatment gas refined to a methane content of 90 percent or greater which may be used as a transportation fuel or for pipeline distribution. Such biogas, landfill gas, or wastewater treatment gas must be produced and collected within Florida.

In establishing this mechanism, the PSC is to consider the intent provided in s. 366.91(1), F.S., for renewable energy. The gas infrastructure investment may include only such investments that collect, prepare, clean, process, transport, or inject gas as a transportation fuel or for pipeline distribution.

The section also requires the PSC to propose a rule for adoption as soon as practicable, but not later than January 1, 2026. These rules must provide for the allocation to public utility customers of the benefit of any tradeable energy credits and tax savings associated with gas infrastructure investments made pursuant to this subsection. The rules must also address the treatment of revenues from sales of gas from such investments for transportation purposes.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 112-0

Committee on Regulated Industries

SB 7006 — Public Records and Meetings/NG911 Systems

by Regulated Industries Committee

The bill saves from repeal the current public records exemptions in s. 119.071(3)(e), F.S., for the following information:

- Building plans, blueprints, schematic drawings, and diagrams, including draft, preliminary, and final formats, which depict the structural elements of 911, E911, or public safety radio communication system infrastructure, including towers, antennas, equipment, or facilities used to provide 911, E911, or public safety radio communication services, or other 911, E911, or public safety radio communication structures or facilities owned and operated by an agency.
- Geographical maps indicating the actual or proposed locations of 911, E911, or public safety radio communication system infrastructure, including towers, antennas, equipment or facilities used to provide 911, E911, or public safety radio services, or other 911, E911, or public safety radio communication structures or facilities owned and operated by an agency.

The bill also saves from repeal a public meeting exemption in s. 286.0113(4), F.S., for any portion of a meeting that would reveal the above information, as well as a public record exemption for any recordings or transcripts of the exempt meetings. The bill also expands the public records exemption and public meeting exemption by adding information relating to Next Generation 911 (NG911) systems to the information protected from disclosure.

The Open Government Sunset Review Act requires the Legislature to review each public record and public meeting exemption 5 years after enactment. These exemptions are scheduled to repeal on October 2, 2025. The bill modifies the scheduled repeals and delays them to October 2, 2030.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.
Vote: Senate 38-0; House 115-0

Committee on Rules

SM 314 — Florida National Guard Increased Force Structure

by Senators Wright, Collins, and Avila

The memorial urges Congress to impel the National Guard Bureau to examine the present allocations to the Florida National Guard and allow an increase to the state's force structure.

The memorial requires the Secretary of State to dispatch copies to the President of the United States, President of the United States Senate, Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and each member of the Florida delegation to the United States Congress.
Vote: Senate Adopted; House Adopted

Committee on Rules

SM 1488 — United States Sovereign Wealth Fund

by Senator Avila

The memorial urges the members of Congress to establish a framework for a sovereign wealth fund.

The memorial requires the Secretary of State to dispatch copies to the President of the United States, President of the United States Senate, Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and each member of the Florida delegation to the United States Congress.
Vote: Senate Adopted; House Adopted

Committee on Transportation

CS/CS/HB 85 — Hazardous Walking Conditions

by Education & Employment Committee; Education Administration Subcommittee; and Rep. Kendall and others (CS/CS/SB 650 by Appropriations Committee on Pre-K-12 Education; Transportation Committee; and Senators Leek and Rouson)

The bill expands the criteria for identifying hazardous walking conditions for public elementary school students to include walkways along a limited access facility, as defined in the Florida transportation code.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 38-0; House 113-0

Committee on Transportation

CS/CS/HB 253 — Offenses Involving Motor Vehicles

by Judiciary Committee; Criminal Justice Subcommittee; and Rep. Bankson and others
(CS/CS/SB 44 by Rules Committee; Transportation Committee; and Senator Rodriguez)

The bill makes various changes to motor vehicle-related offenses, including:

- Increases the penalty if a person drives a vehicle with prohibited lights and stops or attempts to stop another vehicle from a first degree misdemeanor to a third degree felony.
- Increases the penalty for knowingly altering or otherwise interfering with the legibility of a license plate from a noncriminal traffic infraction to a second degree misdemeanor.
- Defines "license plate obscuring device" and prohibits a person from purchasing or possessing a license plate obscuring device, a violation of which is punishable as a second degree misdemeanor.
- Prohibits a person from manufacturing, selling, offering for sale, or otherwise distributing a license plate obscuring device, a violation of which is punishable as a first degree misdemeanor.
- Prohibits a person from using a license plate obscuring device to assist in committing a crime or escaping from or avoiding detection or arrest in connection with such crime, a violation of which is punishable as a third degree felony.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect October 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 115-0

Committee on Transportation

CS/CS/CS/HB 351 — Dangerous Excessive Speeding

by State Affairs Committee; Criminal Justice Subcommittee; Government Operations Subcommittee; and Reps. Plasencia, Alvarez, D., and others (CS/SB 1782 by Transportation Committee and Senator Pizzo)

The bill creates a criminal offense for "dangerous excessive speeding" if a motor vehicle driver exceeds the speed limit by 50 miles per hour (mph) or more, or operates a motor vehicle at 100 mph or more in a manner that threatens the safety of other persons or property or interferes with the operation of any vehicle.

The bill provides that a person who commits dangerous excessive speeding is punished as follows:

- Upon a first conviction, up to 30 days in jail, a fine of $500, or both.
- Upon a second or subsequent conviction, up to 90 days in jail, a fine of $1,000, or both. A person convicted of a second or subsequent violation of dangerous excessive speeding within five years after the date of a prior conviction for such an offense must have his or her driving privilege revoked for at least 180 days but no more than one year.

The bill provides that any driver who commits an infraction for exceeding the speed limit in excess of 50 mph must appear before a designated official at a mandatory hearing.

The bill authorizes, rather than requires, an officer to indicate the applicable civil penalty on a traffic citation for infractions related to exceeding the speed limit by 30 mph or more, or 50 mph or more.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 75-38

Committee on Transportation

CS/CS/HB 429 — Motor Vehicle Manufacturers and Franchised Motor Vehicle Dealers

by Commerce Committee; Industries & Professional Activities Subcommittee; and Rep. Yeager, and others (CS/SB 1820 by Transportation Committee and Senator Leek)

The bill revises certain provisions of the Florida Motor Vehicle Dealership Act, which governs the licensure of, and contractual relationship between, motor vehicle dealers and motor vehicle manufacturers, distributors, importers, and their common entities (licensees). Specifically, the bill revises provisions relating to a licensee's use of criteria for measuring a franchised motor vehicle dealer's sales or service performance; prohibits licensees from engaging in certain conduct as retaliation against a motor vehicle dealer for specified acts; and revises provisions governing discontinuations, cancellations, non-renewals, modifications, and replacements of franchise agreements.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 115-0

Committee on Transportation

CS/CS/CS/SB 462 — Transportation

by Fiscal Policy Committee; Regulated Industries Committee; Transportation Committee; and Senator DiCeglie

The bill addresses various transportation-related provisions. Specifically, the bill:

- Authorizes the use of off-highway vehicles on beaches for the removal of rental equipment, if authorized by the appropriate local governing body;
- Requires counties to annually submit information regarding their use of the Charter County and Regional Transportation System Surtax revenues to the Office of Economic and Demographic Research, with the office compiling such information into a report to the Legislature and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT);
- Revises the statutory definitions of the terms “dynamic driving task” and "micromobility device;”
- Establishes administrative hearing procedures regarding school bus infraction detection systems, providing for local hearing officers appointed by the school district or county, hearing procedures, the distribution of civil penalties, and the authorized use of penalties collected;
- Authorizes local governments to adopt certain ordinances regarding requirements to operate an electric bicycle, motorized scooter, or micromobility device;
- Authorizes local governments to provide training on the safe operation of electric bicycles, motorized scooters, and micromobility devices;
- Prohibits a person from operating a motor vehicle or vessel on a flooded street or highway at a speed that creates an excessive wake;
- Requires the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicle or its authorized agents to issue expectant mother parking permits authorizing expectant mothers to park in disabled parking spaces;
- Prohibits airports from charging new landing fees for aircraft operations related to flight training operations conducted by certain academic institutions;
- Authorizes public-use airports to participate in the federal Airport Investment Partnership Program and make such airports eligible to receive certain state funds;
- Establishes a pilot program at the Sarasota Manatee Airport Authority to determine the long-term feasibility of alternative airport permitting procedures and requires FDOT to submit a report regarding this pilot program;
- Authorizes FDOT to use eminent domain to preserve corridors for future improvements;
- Authorizes FDOT to provide workforce development grants to state colleges and school districts to fund elective courses in heavy civil construction;
- Revises the membership of the advisory board for the Center for Urban Transportation Research at the University of South Florida;
- Requires project concept studies and project development and environmental studies for capacity improvements on limited access facilities to evaluate the use of elevated roadways;
- Requires project development and environmental studies for new alignments or capacity improvement projects, to the maximum extent possible, be completed within 18 months;

- Provides requirements for FDOT to obtain reduced offers, with a change in the scope of work, from the lowest bidder on a project when it intends to reject all bids;
- Revises provisions related to phased design-build contracts, including authorizing the selected design-build firm to perform a portion of the work;
- Requires FDOT's bridge-related contracts for work over navigable waters to, in addition to marine general liability insurance, include insurance with protection and indemnity coverage;
- Authorizes FDOT to waive prequalification requirements for certain short duration contracts of $1 million or less;
- Authorizes FDOT to waive contract bond requirements for contracts of $250,000 or less, instead of the current $150,000 or less;
- Requires contractors seeking to bid on certain FDOT maintenance contracts to possess the prescribed qualifications, equipment, record, and experience to perform such work;
- Increases threshold amounts for contract disputes subject to the State Arbitration Board and revises the length of time that arbitration requests may be made related to a warranty claim;
- Prohibits the designation of new metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) in areas contiguous to an existing MPO;
- Requires FDOT to annually convene MPOs of similar size, to exchange best practices and authorizes FDOT to provide training to new members of MPO governing boards;
- Provides for the integration of new technologies into MPO transportation plans;
- Authorizes FDOT and each MPO to execute a written agreement to establish a cooperative relationship regarding transportation planning;
- Requires FDOT to establish, in cooperation with the MPO, performance metrics for the MPO, and provides that the MPO must annually report on its performance;
- Requires FDOT to prioritize highway projects on the Strategic Intermodal System to make a highway corridor contiguous in its functional characteristics;
- Requires FDOT to implement a Next-generation Traffic Signal Modernization Program to increase the interconnectivity of traffic signals;
- Revises the geographic residency requirements for two of the members of the governing body of the Greater Miami Expressway Agency;
- Requires FDOT to develop and submit a report to the Governor and Legislature, by December 31, 2025, regarding the widening of a portion Interstate 4 in Hillsborough and Polk counties.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025, except where otherwise provided.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 114-0

Committee on Transportation

CS/HB 479 — Leaving the Scene of a Crash Involving Only Damage to Vehicle or Property

by Criminal Justice Subcommittee and Rep. Daley (CS/SB 1378 by Transportation Committee and Senator Arrington)

The bill (Chapter 2025-14, L.O.F.) authorizes a court to order a driver convicted of leaving the scene of a crash that resulted in damage to a vehicle or other property to make restitution to the vehicle or property owner for any damage caused by the driver's vehicle. A court may only order such restitution if the driver caused or otherwise contributed to the cause of the crash.

These provisions were approved by the Governor and take effect October 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 107-0

Committee on Transportation

CS/HB 867 — Indemnification and Insurance Obligations of Commuter Rail Transportation Providers

by Economic Infrastructure Subcommittee and Rep. Lopez, V. (CS/SB 916 by Transportation Committee and Senator Rodriguez)

The bill creates the Coastal Link Commuter Rail Service Act and establishes parameters related to the indemnification of, and insurance related to, agencies providing commuter rail service on the Coastal Link corridor. Specifically, the bill:

- Defines various terms related to this act, including, the term "agency," which is defined as a state, county, municipality, district, authority, or other separate unity of government which has entered into an agreement with Brightline permitting it to operate commuter rail service on the Coastal Link corridor.
- Names Brightline, the Florida East Coast Railway, the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority, and an agency as parties operating rail service on the Coastal Link corridor, which is the rail transit system in Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties.
- Authorizes an agency to assume certain obligations regarding rail liability on the Coastal Link corridor, subject to specified limitations related to passengers and other rail corridor invitees.
- Limits an agency's assumptions of liability by contract related to specified scenarios when various entities, operators, or persons are involved in a rail accident.
- Provides an insurance coverage limit of $323 million per occurrence, to be adjusted, without prior legislative approval, in accordance with federal law.
- Requires the agency to establish a self-insurance retention fund in the amount of $5 million.
- Provides for the allocation of liability on the rail corridor under specified scenarios involving specified rail operators.
- Provides that neither the assumption of liability, the purchase of insurance, or the establishment of a self-insurance retention fund is not a waiver of any defense of sovereign immunity, nor does it increase an agency's limits on liability under sovereign immunity.
- Provides that the Florida East Coast Railway and Brightline are not entitled to sovereign immunity.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 35-2; House 114-0

Committee on Transportation

CS/CS/HB 961 — Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles

by State Affairs Committee; Government Operations Subcommittee; and Reps. Maney, Melo and others (CS/CS/CS/SB 1348 by Appropriations Committee; Appropriations Committee on Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development; Transportation Committee; and Senator Trumbull)

The bill makes various revisions to programs and services administered by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) and its agents, including:

- Prohibits a person, without authorization from the DHSMV or a tax collector, from selling or offering to sell service appointments offered by the DHSMV or an authorized tax collector and creates a first degree misdemeanor for violation of the prohibition.
- Authorizes tax collectors to deliver certain titles, certificates, and other documents, plates, and stickers by mail or make them available at their offices.
- Revises the requirements governing the issuance of disabled parking permits and creates a lifetime disabled parking permit for persons who are permanently disabled due to amputation or dismemberment.
- Revises the deadline by which the transition of driver license issuance services to tax collectors in certain counties must be completed from 2015 to 2027.
- Provides that certain driver applicants that cheat on their driver license exams must retake such exams.
- Authorizes tax collectors to process specified driver license and identification card transactions using the DHSMV's online license and registration portal and to offer licensees the option to round up for charitable donations to charities registered with the state.
- Requires the revocation of a restricted driving privilege for a habitual offender who is granted a limited driving privilege and subsequently violates the conditions of the restricted driving privilege.
- Designates the week of April 14 as "Move Over Awareness Week."

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2026.
Vote: Senate 38-0; House 115-0

Committee on Transportation

CS/CS/HB 987 — Transportation Facility Designations

by Commerce Committee; Economic Infrastructure Committee; and Reps. Brannan, Nix, and others (CS/SB 1408 by Fiscal Policy Committee and Senators Collins and Martin)

The bill creates a number of honorary designations of transportation facilities and directs the Florida Department of Transportation to erect suitable markers for each of the following designations:

- Heroes Memorial Overpass in Bradford County.
- Sergeant Elio Diaz Memorial Highway in Charlotte County.
- PBSO Motorman Highway in Palm Beach County.
- Staff Sergeant Matthew Sitton Memorial Highway in Pinellas County.
- Sheriff Gary S. Borders Memorial Highway in Lake County.
- Master Deputy Bradley Link Memorial Highway in Lake County.
- Sergeant Karl Strohsal Memorial Highway in Seminole County.
- SPC Daniel J. Agami Bridge in Broward County.
- Deputy William May Memorial Highway in Walton County.
- Manolo Reyes Boulevard in Miami-Dade County.
- Master Patrol Officer Jesse Madsen Memorial Highway in Hillsborough County.
- Geraldine Thompson Way in Orange County.
- Harris Rosen Way in Orange County.
- Harry Frisch Street in Duval County.
- Senator James A. Sebesta Memorial Highway in Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties.
- Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart Memorial Highway in Miami-Dade County.
- Jose Wejebe Bridge in Monroe County.
- Celia Cruz Way in Miami-Dade County.
- President Donald J. Trump Boulevard in Palm Beach County.
- Sonia Castro Way in Miami-Dade County.

The bill also revises the length of the previously designated Deputy William Gentry, Jr., Memorial Highway in Highlands County.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 111-0

Committee on Transportation

SB 994 — Driver License Education Requirements

by Senator Collins

The bill provides that each applicant for a driver license who is 18 years of age or older must complete an approved traffic law and substance abuse education course.

The bill also provides that each applicant for learner's driver license must satisfactorily complete a driver education course approved by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles which meets or exceeds the Department of Education Driver Education/Traffic Safety-Classroom #1900300 current course description.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 33-0; House 112-0

Committee on Transportation

CS/HB 1487 —Emergency Services

by Health Professions & Programs Subcommittee and Rep. Basabe and others (CS/SB 1644 by Transportation Committee and Senator Rodriguez)

The bill removes the limitation of two red or red and white warning signals (emergency lights) on privately owned vehicles belonging to firefighters, certain medical personnel, and organ transport vehicles responding to emergencies.

The bill revises the criteria for a faith-based, nonprofit, volunteer ambulance service to obtain an exemption from the certificate of public convenience and necessity (COPCN) requirement. The bill increases the minimum requirements for years of experience from 10 to 15, and the minimum number of volunteer emergency medical technicians and paramedics from 50 to 150. The bill also requires these volunteers to operate in at least three counties.

The bill also expands eligibility for a COPCN exemption by making the exemption available in 15 counties, rather than four counties; and allows a volunteer ambulance service that receives government funding to qualify for this exemption. The bill also prohibits a volunteer ambulance service from receiving funds from any grant program designed exclusively for publicly operated fire departments or emergency medical service agencies.

The bill requires an applicant for a COPCN exemption to submit an affidavit to the Department of Health attesting that it meets the statutory requirements for the exemption. The bill provides that submitting a fraudulent affidavit is a misdemeanor of the first degree.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 115-0

Committee on Transportation

CS/CS/HB 1525 — Prearranged Transportation Services

by Judiciary Committee; Criminal Justice Subcommittee; and Rep. Busatta and others (CS/SB 1696 by Rules Committee and Senator Calatayud)

The bill prohibits a person from willfully impersonating a transportation network company (TNC) driver by making a false statement, displaying counterfeit signage or emblems of a TNC, or engaging in any other act that falsely represents that the person represents a TNC or is responding to a passenger ride request for a TNC. Under the bill, a violation of this prohibition is generally a second degree misdemeanor; however, a person commits a third degree felony if he or she impersonates a TNC driver during the commission of, or to facilitate the commission of, a separate felony offense.

The bill provides that services purchased from a TNC do not qualify as privately owned or operated bus transit systems as it relates to transit safety standards.

The bill authorizes the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged to expend funds to contract with alternative transportation providers to support transportation services for persons with disabilities. Such services must be tailored to the rider's specified needs and comply with commission service standards.

The bill revises the definition of "transportation service provider" for purposes of paratransit service contracts to provide that an organization or entity that contracts with a local government entity to provide paratransit service to persons with disabilities must use a dedicated fleet of vehicles operated by its employees or directly contracted drivers who meet paratransit service standards. The bill also provides that a TNC is not a transportation service provider, and thus not subject to such regulations.

Finally, the bill modifies training requirements for paratransit drivers to authorize driver access to third-party training materials.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 116-0

Committee on Transportation

CS/CS/CS/SB 1662 — Transportation

by Appropriations Committee; Appropriations Committee on Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development; Transportation Committee; and Senator Collins

The bill addresses various transportation-related provisions. Specifically, the bill:

- Provides position titles for the three assistant secretaries of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT);
- Authorizes the Secretary of Transportation to appoint an Executive Director of Transportation Technology;
- Revises the qualifications for Florida Transportation Commission (FTC) members to require that at least three commissioners have expertise in higher education, transportation, or workforce development;
- Requires the FTC to monitor the efficiency, productivity, and management of any transit entity receiving funding under the public transit block grant program;
- Creates the Florida Transportation Research Institute, with representatives from specified state colleges and universities, as a consortium of higher education professionals;
- Adds operational technology to FDOT's areas of program responsibility;
- Authorizes certain space-related and commercial shipbuilding and manufacturing projects on seaport property to receive Florida Seaport Transportation and Economic Development funding;
- Provides that the purpose of the Florida Seaport Transportation and Economic Development Council is to support the growth of seaports through the review, development, and financing of port facilities;
- Requires each seaport to submit a semiannual report to FDOT regarding its operations and support of Florida's economic competitiveness and supply chain;
- Prohibits state funding to seaports in a county with a spaceport territory unless the seaport agrees not to convert cargo facilities to other purposes unless the conversion is approved by the governing body of the seaport and such project is approved by the Legislature;
- Creates an Intermodal Logistic Center working group within FDOT and provides for its membership and responsibilities relating to the expansion and development of intermodal logistic centers;
- Authorizes FDOT to issue blanket permits allowing the movement of certain large cranes, including movement at night;
- Repeals provisions regarding high-occupancy vehicle lanes, including a related toll exemption;
- Authorizes the withholding of state transportation funds to local jurisdictions if the local jurisdiction has traffic signals that are not in compliance with FDOT's uniform system for traffic control devices;
- Authorizes a disabled veteran who is eligible for a disabled veteran license plate to be issued a special or specialty license plate embossed with the initials "DV" in the top left-hand corner;
- Updates statutory definitions related to airport licensing and authorizes the establishment of private airports of public interest;

- Requires private airports of public interest to receive a certificate from FDOT and provides requirements, including a site inspection, for obtaining such a certificate;
- Prohibits airports from charging new landing fees for aircraft operations related to flight training operations conducted by certain academic institutions;
- Authorizes FDOT, in consultation with the Department of Commerce and the Department of Environmental Protection, to fund projects associated with critical infrastructure facilities, that support space-related facilities;
- Requires airports to provide FDOT with the opportunity to use certain airport property, at no cost to the state, as a staging area during declared states of emergency related to natural disasters;
- Authorizes FDOT to fund additional aviation-related workforce development projects;
- Requires commercial service airports to establish and maintain comprehensive airport infrastructure programs and submit annual certifications to FDOT that the airport has established and maintained such a program;
- Adds additional project types to those eligible for priority airport funding from FDOT, including certain terminal and parking expansions; safety and efficiency improvements; and technology, workforce development, and intermodal connectivity projects;
- Incorporates nonhub airports into commercial service airport transparency and accountability requirements and amends such requirements for all commercial service airports;
- Requires commercial service airports to notify FDOT within 48 hours after receiving certain communications or directives from the federal government and following cybersecurity breaches, certain disruptions in aviation operations, or certain incidents on airport property;
- Codifies advanced air mobility into Florida law, including requirements for FDOT to address issues related to advances in aviation technology;
- Revises FDOT's authorization for public information and education campaigns;
- Revises FDOT's annual spending requirement relating to landscaping and requires FDOT's landscaping standards to include native landscaping materials;
- Authorizes FDOT to directly enter into insurance contracts to purchase insurance it is contractually and legally required to provide;
- Authorizes FDOT to purchase or acquire heavy equipment or motor vehicles for certain purposes, whether or not it exchanges or ceases operating any currently owned heavy equipment or motor vehicles;
- Authorizes FDOT to adopt rules to comply with federal requirements regarding disadvantaged business enterprises;
- Authorizes parking authorities created by special act to, pursuant to an interlocal agreement, operate in jurisdictions contiguous to their chartered jurisdictions;
- Creates the Florida Transportation Academy, within FDOT, to coordinate with certain public and private entities regarding workforce development in the transportation industry;
- Authorizes FDOT to require the modification of an existing connection to a state road due to safety or operational concerns;

- Increases the size of a "small business" as it relates to the FDOT's business development program and authorizes FDOT to provide notices of opportunities to qualified businesses;
- Repeals FDOT's disadvantaged business enterprise program and changes references to disadvantaged businesses to reflect FDOT's support of small businesses;
- Authorizes the Secertary of Transportation to require a successful bidder to submit a surety bond in an amount less than the awarded contract price;
- Prohibits a municipality from prohibiting, or requiring a permit for, the installation of certain sewer transmission lines on the right-of-way performed under permits issued by FDOT or the Department of Environmental Protection;
- Prohibits camping on right-of-way of the State Highway System, except on the Florida National Scenic Trail with the appropriate permit;
- Requires FDOT to submit a report identifying transit providers, transportation authorities, airports, and seaports that have adopted or promoted energy policy goals inconsistent with the energy policy of the state;
- Repeals an obsolete requirement that FDOT submit a report by July 1, 2021, regarding electric vehicle charging infrastructure;
- Revises and makes permanent FDOT's Strategic Intermodal System supply chain demands (aggregate) program;
- Revises and makes permanent the allocation of unused New Starts Transit funds to FDOT's Strategic Intermodal System;
- Revises the membership of the Jacksonville Transportation Authority's governing body to provide for members from Clay, St. Johns, and Nassau counties;
- Requires FDOT to coordinate with all state agencies to establish a workgroup to review state statutes, policies, practices, and standards related to a statewide mapping program and submit a report to the Legislature by November 15, 2025.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 103-7

Special Master on Claim Bills

SB 8 — Relief of Marcus Button by the Pasco County School Board

by Senator Simon

The bill authorizes and directs the Pasco County School Board (PCSB) to appropriate from funds of the school board not otherwise encumbered and pay $1 million to a trust for the sole and exclusive benefit of Marcus Button as compensation for harms and losses he sustained due to the negligence of an employee of the PCSB in a vehicle crash that occurred on September 22, 2006, between a PCSB school bus and the vehicle in which Marcus Button was a passenger.

The bill also authorizes and directs the PCSB to appropriate $200,000 to Robin Button, as the surviving parent and natural guardian of Marcus Button, as compensation for harms and losses sustained by her and Mark Button, now deceased, for the injuries to Marcus Button.

The PCSB did not appeal the trial court judgment ordering the PCSB to pay $1,380,967.39 to Marcus Button and $289,396.85 to his parents. The PCSB has paid $163,000 of the $200,000 statutory limit applicable at the time the claim arose, to Marcus Button and to his parents. The parties have agreed to a total settlement in the amount of $1.2 million to relieve, forever and completely, the PCSB of any and all further responsibility regarding the vehicle crash.

The total amount paid for attorney fees relating to this claim may not exceed 25 percent of the total amounts awarded under this bill.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.
Vote: Senate 35-0; House 116-0

Special Master on Claim Bills

CS/SB 10 — Relief of Sidney Holmes by the State of Florida

by Judiciary Committee and Senator Pizzo

Sidney Holmes was 22 years old when he was wrongfully arrested. He was alleged to have participated in an armed robbery in Broward County. Based on the now-discounted eyewitness testimony of one person, and despite the testimony of numerous alibi witnesses, he was wrongfully convicted of the charge and sentenced to 400 years in state prison. It took longer than 34 years for him to prove his innocence and be released from prison. Because he had a prior criminal record, he was ineligible for compensation under the statutory process for compensation for wrongful incarceration. This claim bill authorizes the payment of the statutory annual compensation of just over $1.7 million plus the waiver of tuition and fees of up to 120 credit hours at any state college or university. His attorneys and representatives graciously waived all professional fees.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.
Vote: Senate 38-0; House 112-0

Special Master on Claim Bills

SB 14 — Relief of the Estate of Peniel Janvier by the City of Miami Beach

by Senator Jones

The bill directs the City of Miami Beach to pay the Estate of Peniel Janvier the sum of $1.7 million as compensation for injuries and damages sustained due to the negligence of the City.

The bill authorizes and directs the City of Miami Beach to appropriate the funds from resources not otherwise encumbered and to draw a warrant in the amount of $1.7 million, payable to the Estate of Peniel Janvier. This amount is in addition to the $300,000 previously paid pursuant to s. 768.28, of the F.S., for a total settlement of $2 million.

The amount awarded under the bill and previously paid, is intended to provide the sole compensation for all present and future claims arising from the incident. The total amount paid for attorney fees may not exceed 25 percent of the amount awarded under the bill.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 115-0

Special Master on Claim Bills

SB 20 — Relief of J.N., a Minor, by Hillsborough County

by Senator Burgess

The bill authorizes and directs Hillsborough County to appropriate funds from the county not otherwise unencumbered and pay $400,000 to J.N., a minor, to be placed in a trust for the exclusive use by J.N. for injuries and damages.

The county failed to properly repair a slab of concrete owned and operated by Hillsborough County. This negligent act caused J.N. to suffer severe facial trauma resulting in fractures, multiple surgeries, and the need for future medical care.

Attorney fees may not exceed 25 percent of the total amount awarded under the bill.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.
Vote: Senate 36-1; House 113-0

Special Master on Claim Bills

CS/SB 22 — Relief of Eric Miles, Jr., and Jennifer Miles by the South Broward Hospital District

by Rules Committee and Senator Rodriguez

The bill authorizes and directs the South Broward Hospital District, d/b/a Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital, to appropriate otherwise unencumbered funds of the district and pay $200,000 to the co-personal representatives of E.E.M., Eric Miles, Jr., and Jennifer Miles.

The hospital's medical staff failed to properly evaluate, diagnose, and treat E.E.M.'s small bowel obstruction. These negligent acts caused E.E.M. to suffer many significant and life-altering injuries, which ultimately led to his death.

Attorney fees may not exceed 25 percent of the total amount awarded under the bill.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.
Vote: Senate 35-0; House 114-0

Special Master on Claim Bills

CS/SB 26 — Relief of Kristen and Lia McIntosh by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

by Judiciary Committee and Senator Gruters

The bill appropriates $2.252 million from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for the relief of Kristen and Lia McIntosh for injuries and damages sustained due to the negligence of an employee of the department's Law Enforcement Division. The bill directs the Chief Financial Officer to pay $1.001 million of such funds to Kristen McIntosh and $1.251 million to Elizabeth Thornton, as parent and natural guardian of Lia McIntosh, a minor child. The funds for Lia McIntosh must be placed in a trust created for her exclusive use and benefit.

The attorney fees may not exceed 25 percent of the total amount awarded under the bill.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.
Vote: Senate 37-0; House 112-0

Special Master on Claim Bills

CS/SB 28 — Relief of Darline Angervil and J.R. by the South Broward Hospital District

by Health Policy Committee and Senator Martin

This is an uncontested claim bill for local funds in the amount of $6,100,000, payable from unencumbered funds of the South Broward Hospital District. The bill is based on a settlement agreement between Darline Angervil and the Hospital District. The settlement agreement resolved a civil action that arose from the alleged negligence of the Hospital District that caused injuries to Darline Angervil and her child, J.R., a minor. The bill provides that $3.1 million is payable to Darline Angervil and $3.0 million is payable to an irrevocable trust created for the exclusive use and benefit of J.R.

The bill provides that the total amount paid for attorney fees relating to this claim may not exceed 25 percent of the total amount awarded under the bill.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.
Vote: Senate 34-0; House 116-0

Special Master on Claim Bills

HB 6503 — Relief of Mande Penney-Lemmon by Sarasota County

by Rep. Nix (SB 24 by Senator DiCeglie)

This bill authorizes and directs Sarasota County to appropriate from funds of the county not otherwise encumbered and pay Mande Penney-Lemmon $2.2 million. Ms. Penney-Lemmon was injured due to the negligence of an employee of Sarasota County.

The attorney fee may not exceed 25 percent of the total amount awarded under the bill.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.
Vote: Senate 35-0; House 116-0

Special Master on Claim Bills

HB 6521 — Relief of Jacob Rodgers by the City of Gainesville

by Rep. Weinberger (SB 96 by Senator Bernard)

The bill authorizes and directs the City of Gainesville to appropriate from funds of the city not otherwise encumbered and pay Jacob Rodgers $10.8 million. Mr. Rodgers was injured due to the negligence of an employee of the City of Gainesville.

The attorney fee may not exceed 25 percent of the total amount awarded under the bill.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.
Vote: Senate 36-0; House 113-0